

# Accommodations Guidelines

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*2025 PSSA and Keystone Exams*



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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## Introduction

The focus of the Accommodations Guidelines is selection, administration, and evaluation of appropriate accommodations for instruction and assessment. Refer to the [Accommodations Guidelines for English Learners](#) for specific accommodations related to English Learners.

Changes to the accommodations guidelines for the 2024-2025 school year are noted using **red font** in this manual. Quick links are provided in the table below.

## What's New for 2024-2025

New/Updated Content	Page
<a href="#">Audio for Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone</a> and <a href="#">Read Aloud for Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone</a>	pg. 22 or pg. 39
Changes to using audio with <a href="#">Braille</a>	pg. 24
<a href="#">Sensory/Self-Regulation Tool</a>	pg. 42
<a href="#">Updates to Unique Accommodations Assurance Process:</a> See changes to streamline the process.	pg. 59

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## **Accommodations and Test Features**

The intent of this guide is to address accommodations for English Learners and students with IEPs and 504 plans. More detailed information for ELs can be found in the [Accommodations Guidelines for ELs](#). This guide also addresses the options available for all students, referred to as “test features”. A test feature is considered an accommodation when the educational team has determined that it is necessary for the student to participate in the assessment.

For example, any student may request the read aloud of a word, phrase, or test item on the Mathematics, Algebra, Science, Biology, multiple choice Conventions of Standard English items, and Text Dependent Analysis prompt in Grades 4-8 Reading sections of the ELA test. Since this option is allowable for all students, it is considered a test feature. Although this is considered a test feature, the read aloud of allowable test parts is also considered an accommodation when the educational team has determined it is necessary for the student to access the test materials. Therefore, it must be documented on the student’s educational plan.

Another example is the use of highlighting. In the online assessment, a highlighter is available for use by any student and is considered a test feature. If a student has a demonstrated need for a highlighter to access the test materials, it must be included in the educational plan. However, any student may use the online highlighter at will.

## **PART 1: Expecting Students with Disabilities to Achieve Grade-Level Academic Content Standards**

With the focus of legislation aimed at accountability and the inclusion of all students comes the drive to ensure equal access to grade-level content standards. Academic content standards are educational targets outlining what students are expected to learn at each grade level. Teachers ensure that students work toward grade-level content standards by using a range of instructional strategies based on the varied strengths and needs of students. For students with disabilities, accommodations are provided during instruction and assessments to help promote equal access to grade-level content. To accomplish this goal of equal access,

- every Individualized Education Program (IEP) team member must be familiar with content standards and accountability systems at the state and district levels;
- every IEP team member must know where to locate standards and updates; and
- collaboration between general and special educators must occur for successful student access.

All students with disabilities can work toward grade-level academic content standards and most of these students will be able to achieve these standards when the following three conditions are met:

1. Instruction is provided by teachers who are qualified to teach in the content areas addressed by state standards and who know how to differentiate instruction for diverse learners.
2. IEPs for students with disabilities are developed to ensure the provision of specialized instruction.
3. Appropriate accommodations are provided to help students access grade-level content.

Pennsylvania has adopted the Pennsylvania Core Standards (PCS) for English language arts and mathematics. To access them, go to [Pennsylvania Core Standards](#). New academic standards for Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy & Sustainability (STEELS) were adopted by the PA State Board of Education in January 2022. To access them, go to [STEELS K-12 Standards](#).

See [Appendix F](#) for specific Federal and State laws regarding testing participation.

## **PART 2: Understanding Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment**

### **What Are Accommodations?**

Accommodations are practices and procedures that ensure that educators, as well as students and parents, have a valid measure of what students with disabilities know and can do. Accommodations use is applied to classroom instruction. In addition, students with IEPs, 504 plans, and ELD plans may be provided with assessment accommodations. Accommodations do not reduce expectations for learning.

Accommodations provided to a student during state assessments must also be provided during classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and district assessments. However, some instructional accommodations may not be appropriate for use on certain statewide assessments. It is critical that educators become familiar with state policies about the appropriate use of accommodations during assessments.

Typically, accommodations use does not begin and end in school. Students who use accommodations will generally also need them at home, in the community, and as they get older, in postsecondary education and at work. As ELs become more proficient in English, their need for accommodations will decrease.

### **Description of Accommodations Categories**

Accommodations for instruction and assessment are commonly categorized in these ways: presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling:

- *Presentation Accommodations*—Allow students to access print information in alternate ways. These alternate modes of access are auditory, multi-sensory, tactile, and visual.
- *Response Accommodations*—Allow students to complete activities, assignments, and assessments in different ways or to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive device or organizer.
- *Setting Accommodations*—Change the location in which a test or assignment is given or the conditions of the assessment setting.
- *Timing/Scheduling Accommodations*—Increase the allowable length of time to complete an assessment or assignment and perhaps change the way the time is organized.

### **Who Is Involved in Accommodations Decisions?**

The **IEP Team** must make assessment and accommodation decisions for students based on individual need. The IEP Team includes the student, parents, the special education teacher, and the LEA representative, as well as others who are knowledgeable about the educational needs of the student. Decisions regarding assessment and accommodations are not made by individuals outside of the IEP Team.

The same decision-making procedures apply for the Student Support Team for 504 Plans and ELD Services.

Accommodations selected may not invalidate the state assessment and must be documented in IEPs, 504 plans, and ELD Services.

Refer to: [Tool 4: Parent Input in Accommodations](#)

## **IEP Team Considerations for Instructional Accommodations**

To assure students with disabilities are engaged in standards-based instruction, every IEP team member needs to be familiar with the state's standards. The process of making decisions about accommodations is one in which the IEP team members attempt to level the playing field so that students with disabilities can participate in the general education curriculum. In leveling the playing field, the team should consider the following:

1. Student characteristics: Reduction of the effects of a disability or language barrier.
2. Instructional tasks expected of students to demonstrate grade-level content in state standards: Assignments and class tests.
3. Consistency with standards-based IEP for classroom instruction and assessments: Fidelity to accommodations and achievement standards noted in IEP.

IEP team members should consider if the student really needs any accommodation. A student may not be receiving an accommodation he or she really needs or may be receiving too many. Research indicates that more is not necessarily better, and that providing students with accommodations that are not truly needed may have a negative impact on performance. The better approach is to focus on a student's identified needs within the general education curriculum.

**PA State Board of Education approved State Academic Standards:** [PA Core Standards](#)

### **Accommodations and Universal Design**

The Keystone and PSSA tests employ the use of universal design principles which address policies and practices that are intended to improve access to learning and assessments for all students. They are important to the development and review of assessments to remove barriers that bar students with disabilities from showing what they know. When universal design techniques are employed, educators can gain a more accurate understanding of what students know and can do. Universal design techniques should be applied from the beginning of test development through the implementation of assessments.

Traditionally, we have thought of universal design as coming first, and accommodations being applied during testing. With current technology, we can build some accommodations into the design of the test itself.

Some of these features may continue to be accommodations (available to students with disabilities and English language learners) and others may be considered online tools that are available to all students. Some students with disabilities and English language learners will have a need for accommodations beyond those that can be built into the testing platform.



## **Accommodations and Modifications**

Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations. They meet specific instruction and assessment needs of students with disabilities and allow educators to know that measures of a student's work are valid.

Modifications refer to practices that change, lower, or reduce learning expectations. Modifications may change the underlying construct of an assessment. Examples of modifications include the following:

- requiring a student to learn less material (e.g., fewer objectives, shorter units or lessons, fewer pages or problems).
- reducing assignments and assessments so a student only needs to complete the easiest problems or items.
- using an accommodation that invalidates the intended construct.
- revising assignments or assessments to make them easier (e.g., crossing out half of the response choices on a multiple-choice test so that a student only has to pick from two options instead of four).
- giving a student hints or clues to correct responses on assignments and tests.

Providing modifications to students during classroom instruction and classroom assessments may have the unintended consequence of reducing their opportunities to learn critical content. If students have not had access to critical, assessed content, they may be at risk of not meeting graduation requirements. Providing a student with a modification during the PSSA or Keystone tests may constitute a test irregularity and may result in an investigation of the school or district's testing practices. It could also affect a student's score.

## **PART 3: Selecting Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment for Individual Students**

To ensure students with disabilities and without disabilities are engaged in standards-based instruction and assessments, every IEP team member and student instructional team member must be knowledgeable about the state and district academic content standards and assessments. Effective decision making about the provision of appropriate accommodations begins with making good instructional decisions. In turn, making appropriate instructional decisions is facilitated by gathering and reviewing good information about the student's disability and present level of academic achievement and functional performance in relation to local and state academic standards.

Accommodations should always be chosen based on individual student need. IEP team meetings or instructional team meetings that simply engage people in checking boxes on a state or local compliance document are neither conducive to sound decision making practices, nor do they advance equal opportunities for students to participate in the general education curriculum.

### **Document Accommodations on a Student's IEP**

For students with disabilities served under IDEA, determining appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations should not pose any problems for IEP teams that follow good IEP practices. With information obtained from the required summary of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), the process of identifying and documenting accommodations should be a straightforward event. The PLAAFP is a federal requirement under which IEP team members must state "how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum—the same curriculum as non-disabled children" [Sec. 614 (d) (1) (A) (i) (I)].

Depending on the design and overall format of a typical IEP, there are potentially three areas in which accommodations can be addressed:

1. "Consideration of Special Factors" [Sec. 614 (d) (3) (B)]. This is where communication and assistive technology supports are considered.
2. "Supplementary Aids and Services" [Sec. 602 (33) and Sec. 614 (d) (1) (A) (i)]. This area of the IEP includes "aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate."
3. "Participation in Assessments" [Sec. 612 (a) (16)]. This section of the IEP documents accommodations needed to facilitate the participation of students with disabilities in general state- and district-wide assessments.

**PA IEP template:** [Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) \(Annotated\)](#)

## **Document Accommodations on a Student's 504 Plan**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires public schools to provide accommodations to students with disabilities even if they do not qualify for special education services under IDEA. The definition of a disability under Section 504 is much broader than the definition under IDEA. All IDEA students are also covered by Section 504, but not all Section 504 students are eligible for services under IDEA. Section 504 states the following:

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely because of her or his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. [29 U.S.C. Sec. 794]

**Chapter 15 Service Agreement:** [Chapter 15. Protected Handicapped Students](#)

## **Document Accommodations in a non-IEP Student's Record**

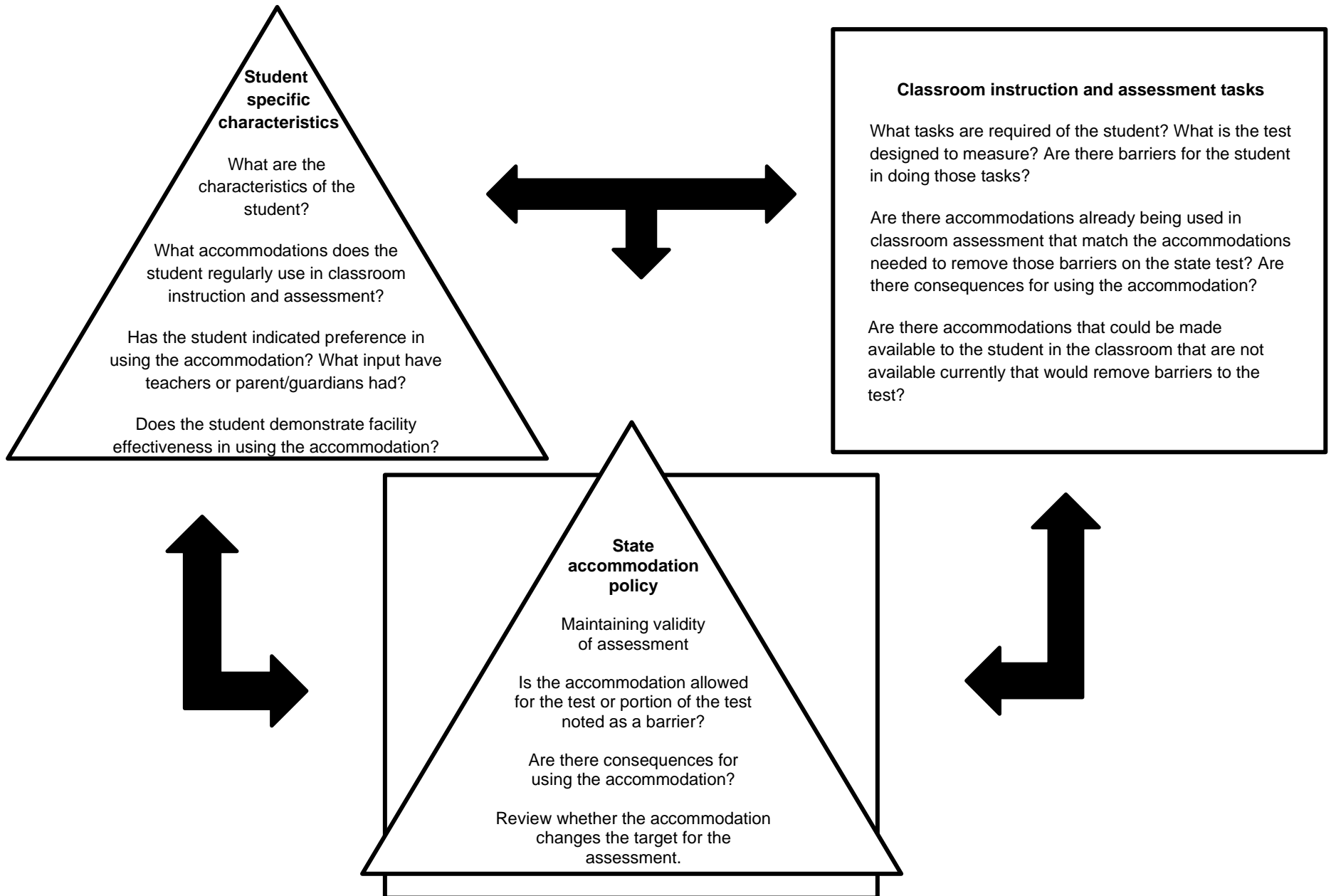
Some students without an IEP may still require an allowable accommodation for the state test. Documentation of the allowable accommodation used by the student for the state test must be kept in the student record file (e.g., Tools 5 and 7). This allows instructional team monitoring of the effectiveness of the accommodation and provides necessary documentation for state monitoring purposes. Independent learning and assessment is the goal for all students. It should not be assumed that struggling readers need accommodations. Some accommodations require documentation in an IEP or 504 plan. [See Table A.](#)

## **The Decision-Making Process**

The decision-making process for state assessment accommodations should include consideration of at least these three factors (see figure 1):

1. Student characteristics (e.g., disabilities, language proficiency, accommodations used in classroom instruction/assessments to access and perform in academic standards and state tests).
2. Individual test characteristics (i.e., knowledge about what tasks are required on state assessments and ways to remove physical and other barriers to students' ability to perform those tasks).
3. State accommodations policies for the assessment or for part of an assessment and consequence of decisions.

**Figure 1. Considerations When Making Decisions for Assessment Accommodations**



## **PART 4: Implementing Accommodations During Instruction and Assessment**

### **Accommodations During Instruction**

The student must be provided the selected accommodations **during instructional** periods that necessitate their use. **An accommodation may not be used solely during assessments.**

As the state moves to providing assessments on technology-based platforms, IEP teams and student instructional teams must take care to ensure that students have opportunities to become familiar with the technological aspects of the assessment process. In addition to taking the practice tutorial using the Insight testing platform, it is also important for educators to provide opportunities for all students to use technology for learning. This is especially important for meeting the PA Core Standards expectation for all students to compose Text-Dependent Analysis responses for the ELA PSSA tests. Also, constructed responses and technology enhanced items continue to be a part of the Keystone and PSSA tests.

**Online tools training platform:** [Online Tools Training Software](#)

The following *online tools* are available to all online test-takers as part of the test format as allowable for each section:

Pointer, cross-off pencil, highlighter, sticky note, magnifier, line guide, calculator, graphing tool, ruler, formula sheets, writing checking lists, conversion tables

Students enrolled in the online test versions will have access to a practice tutorial. Students must be provided with enough time using the practice tutorial and online tools to allow for optimal performance during the actual test.

### **Accommodations During Assessment**

#### ***Planning for Test Day***

Once decisions have been made about providing accommodations to meet individual student needs, the logistics of providing the actual accommodations during state and district assessments must be mapped out. It is not uncommon for members of the IEP team, most often special education teachers, to be given the responsibility for arranging, coordinating, and providing assessment accommodations for all students who may need them. Thus, it is essential for all IEP team members to know and understand the requirements and consequences of district and state assessments, including the use of accommodations. It is important to engage the appropriate personnel to plan the logistics and provisions of assessment accommodations on test day.

Prior to the day of a test, be certain test administrators and proctors know what accommodations each student will be using and how to administer them properly. For example, test administrators and proctors need to know whether a student needs to test in a separate location so that plans can be made accordingly. Staff administering accommodations, such as reading to a student or writing student responses, must adhere to specific guidelines so that student scores are valid.

The current design of the online testing platform allows for some accommodations to be provided on the testing platform itself. Through a process of creating a student profile, an IEP team may work with the assessment coordinator to program the test to provide certain accommodations, such as color contrast and audio functions. Providing these accommodations through the testing platform can guarantee that the provision of accommodations is standardized from student to student and district to district. However, it is important to monitor the provision of accommodations on test day to ensure that accommodations are delivered and the technology is working as it should. The assessment coordinator must ensure that all test material is completely removed from testing devices each day.

*Refer to:*

[Tool 5: Accommodations Use in the Classroom](#)

[Tool 6: After Test Accommodations Questions](#)

[Tool 7: Assessment Accommodations Plan](#)

## **Administering Assessments and Accommodations**

State and local laws and policies specify practices to assure test security and the standardized and ethical administration of assessments. Test administrators, proctors, and all staff involved in test administration must adhere to these policies and must be certified through the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT). Test administrators who are required to provide a read-aloud or scribing accommodation for a student(s) must follow the [Read-Aloud and Scribing Guidelines for Operational Assessments](#).

The Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement (NCME, 1995) states that test administrators and others involved in assessments must

- take appropriate security precautions before, during, and after the administration of the assessment;
- understand the procedures needed to administer the assessment prior to administration;
- administer standardized assessments according to prescribed procedures and conditions and notify appropriate persons if any nonstandard or delimiting conditions occur;
- avoid any conditions in the conduct of the assessment that might invalidate the results;
- provide for and document all reasonable and allowable accommodations for the administration of the assessment to persons with disabilities or special needs; and
- avoid actions or conditions that would permit or encourage individuals or groups to receive scores that misrepresent their actual levels of attainment.

Failure to adhere to these practices may constitute a test irregularity or a breach of test security and must be reported and investigated according to state and local testing policies.

## Ethical Testing Practices

Ethical testing practices must be maintained during the administration of a test. Unethical testing practices relate to inappropriate interactions between test administrators and students taking the test. Unethical practices include, but are not limited to, allowing a student to answer fewer questions, changing the content by paraphrasing, or offering additional information, coaching students during testing, editing student responses, or giving clues in any way.

PDE recommends the presence of a test proctor in addition to the test administrator in the testing room when the teacher of record administers the test.

## Standardization

Standardization refers to adherence to uniform administration procedures and conditions during an assessment. Standardization is an essential feature of educational assessments and is necessary to produce comparable information about student learning. Strict adherence to guidelines detailing instructions and procedures for the administration of accommodations is necessary to ensure test results reflect actual student learning. Test administrators who are required to provide a read-aloud and/or scribing accommodation for a student(s) must follow the [Read-Aloud and Scribing Guidelines for Operational Assessments](#). The [Accommodations Tables](#) and [Tool 2: Guidelines for Using Accommodations](#) provide guidance for the standard administration of allowable accommodations for the Keystone and PSSA tests.

## Test Security

Test security involves maintaining the confidentiality of test questions and answers; it is critical in ensuring the integrity and validity of a test. Scribe/Interpreters must sign [Test Security Certification](#) form (located in the Handbook for Assessment Coordinators).

In a paper-and-pencil test, test security can become an issue when accessible test formats are used (e.g., Braille, enlarged print) or when someone other than the student is allowed to see the test (e.g., interpreter, reader, scribe). To ensure test security and confidentiality, test administrators must keep testing materials in a secure place during testing sessions to prevent unauthorized access, keep all test content confidential and refrain from sharing information or revealing test content with anyone, securely destroy all student original work (including scratch paper); and return all materials as instructed. Test administrators who are required to provide a read-aloud and/or scribing accommodation for a student(s) must follow the [Read-Aloud and Scribing Guidelines for Operational Assessments](#).

Some of the same considerations for test security apply when students are taking the online test. For example, school and district personnel must ensure that only authorized persons have access to the test and that test materials are kept confidential. In addition, it is important to guarantee that students are seated in such a manner that they cannot see each other's workstations, that students are not able to access any additional programs or the internet while they are taking the assessment, and that students are not able to access any saved data or computer shortcuts while taking the test. Online testing is meant to enhance student independence. Test administrators may not interact with the test material. Test administrators who are required to provide a read-aloud or scribing accommodation for a student(s) must follow the [Read-Aloud and Scribing Guidelines for Operational Assessments](#).

*Refer to [Tool 1: Guidelines for Selecting Accommodations](#) and [Tool 2: Guidelines for Using Accommodations](#) for additional considerations.*



## **PART 5: Evaluating and Improving Use of Accommodations**

Accommodations must be selected based on the individual student's needs and must be used consistently for both instruction and assessment. Collecting and analyzing data on the use and effectiveness of accommodations is necessary to ensure the meaningful participation of students with disabilities in state- and district-wide assessments. Data on the use and impact of accommodations during assessments may reveal questionable patterns of accommodations use, as well as support the continued use of some accommodations or the rethinking of others.

### **What Information Should Be Collected?**

Gathering information on accommodations may be easier in a technology-based assessment platform when the accommodations are programmed into the system. However, just because information *can* be collected does not automatically indicate that it is meaningful. Some test features are available to all online test takers, such as the online tools. Other available options for the online test must be pre-programmed and are considered accommodations, such as the audio engine and the color contrast function.

For the paper-and-pencil assessment, information on the use of accommodations is coded on the answer booklet with other student information.

### **Questions to Guide Evaluation of Accommodation Use at the School/District Level**

1. Are there policies to ensure ethical testing practices, standardized administration of assessments, and proper test security practices before, during, and after the day of the test?
2. Are there procedures in place to ensure test administration procedures are not compromised with the provision of accommodations?
3. Are students receiving accommodations as documented in their IEPs, 504 plans, and/or ELD plans?
4. Are there procedures in place to ensure that test administrators adhere to directions for the implementation of accommodations?
5. How many students with IEPs or 504 plans are receiving accommodations?
6. What types of accommodations are provided, and are some used more than others?
7. How do students who receive accommodations perform on state and local assessments? If students are not meeting the expected level of performance, is it due to not receiving the necessary instruction, not receiving the accommodation, or using accommodations that were not effective?

## Questions to Guide Evaluation at the Student Level

These questions can be used to evaluate the accommodations used at the student level, as well as the school or district levels:

1. What accommodations are used by the student during instruction and assessments?
2. What are the results of classroom assignments and assessments when accommodations are used, versus when accommodations are not used? If a student did not meet the expected level of performance, is it due to not having access to the necessary instruction, not receiving the accommodations, choosing not to use the accommodation, or using accommodations that were ineffective? Or was there another reason?
3. What is the student's perception of how well the accommodation worked?
4. What combinations of accommodations seem to be effective?
5. What are the difficulties encountered in the use of accommodations?
6. What are the perceptions of teachers and others about how the accommodation appears to be working?

It is critical to stress that evaluation of accommodations use is not the responsibility of just one individual. The entire IEP team should contribute to the information gathering and decision-making processes.

## Postsecondary Implications

College and career readiness is an important educational outcome for all students. As students with disabilities plan for their transition to postsecondary settings, it is important for IEP teams to have documented the student's use of accommodations so that the student can continue to use them as needed in college and career settings. Colleges and universities may allow fewer accommodations than were available in K–12 settings, so it is important for students to document their need to use accommodations. This may also be true for students who transition into vocational and other workplace settings.

Refer to [Tool 3: Accommodations from the Student's Perspective](#) and [Tool 7: Assessment Accommodations Plan](#) for strategies for evaluating use of accommodations.

## **PART 6: How to Use the Accommodation Tables**

Two accommodations tables are provided in this section. The tables must be used to fully understand the features and implementation of each accommodation type. Some accommodations are only allowable for certain students on certain parts of the test, e.g., a word-to-word bilingual dictionary is allowed only for EL students on the Math, Algebra, Biology and Science tests. A word-to-word dictionary is NOT allowed for the ELA or Literature test(s). Check both tables for each accommodation.

**Table A:** First, read [Table A](#) to determine if the accommodation is available for non-IEP, IEP/504 and/or EL students, if it is available for the paper/pencil and/or online version of the test and how it is imbedded in the online test, and if it is a unique accommodation. Table A is intended to be a quick guide to available accommodations, who can use them, and in which format.

Note: Accommodations in the column labeled “Allowable as a Stand-Alone Accommodation for English Learners” can be used as part of the student’s ELD services without an IEP or 504.

**Table B:** Next, read [Table B](#) to understand the details of the accommodation used by the student, including definitions and intended use, directions for use, documentation of use, and links to related accommodations. For easy access, Table A headings link to Table B headings.

**TABLE A**

Accommodation/Identified Need	Allowable for IEP/504 and Documented Need	Allowable for IEP/504 only	Allowable as a Stand-Alone Accommodation for English Learners	Available for Paper and Pencil Test	Available for Online Test	Provided by Online System	Unique (requires Assurance to PDE)
<a href="#">Amplification Device</a>	X			X	X	X Volume Control Only	
<a href="#">Assistance with Selecting Response</a>	X			X	X		
<a href="#">Assistive Technology Device (formerly Computer Assistive Technology)</a>		X		X	X		X
<a href="#">Audio for Math, Science, and Writing Items</a>	X		X		X	X	
<a href="#">Audio for Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone</a>		X			X	X	X
<a href="#">Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC)</a>		X		X			X
<a href="#">Braille, Refreshable Braille, Brailler, Note Taker</a>		X		X	X	X Presentation Only	
<a href="#">Broken Arm/Injury</a>	X			X	X	X Keyboarding	X 4-8 ELA Scribing ONLY
<a href="#">Calculators (Adaptive)</a>	X			X	X	X	X For calculator apps on devices ONLY
<a href="#">Changed Test Schedule</a>	X		X	X	X		
<a href="#">Color Chooser/Contrast; Color Overlay for Color Blindness or Visual Disability</a>	X			X	X	X	
<a href="#">Concussion</a>	X			X	X		If used with other Unique Accommodation
<a href="#">Cueing System for On Task Behavior</a>	X		X	X	X		

**Table A (cont.)**

Accommodation/Identified Need	Allowable for IEP/504 and Documented Need	Allowable for IEP/504 only	Allowable as a Stand-Alone Accommodation for English Learners	Available for Paper and Pencil Test	Available for Online Test	Provided by Online System	Unique (requires Assurance to PDE)
<a href="#">Delayed Auditory Feedback (DAF) / Pitch-shifting Frequency-altered Auditory Feedback (FAF)</a>	X			X	X		X
<a href="#">De-spiral Test Booklets</a>	X		X	X			
<a href="#">Dictionary</a>			X	X	X		
<a href="#">Enlarged Print</a>		X		X	X	X Test expands to size of screen	
<a href="#">Extended Time</a>	X		X	X	X		
<a href="#">Frequent Breaks</a>	X		X	X	X		
<a href="#">Glucose/Medical Monitoring</a>	X			X	X		X
<a href="#">Hospital/Home</a>	X			X	X		
<a href="#">Interpret/Translate</a>		X	X	X	X	X VSL Only	
<a href="#">Keyboarding, Typing</a>	X		X	X	X	X	
<a href="#">Magnification</a>	X			X	X	X	
<a href="#">Math Manipulatives</a>		X		X	X		
<a href="#">Mixed-Mode Response</a>	X		X	X	X	X	
<a href="#">Monitor Test Response</a>		X		X	X		
<a href="#">Noise Canceling Headphones</a>	X			X	X		
<a href="#">One-to-One</a>	X		X	X	X		
<a href="#">Read Aloud Test Directions</a>	X		X	X	X		

**Table A (cont.)**

Accommodation/Identified Need	Allowable for IEP/504 and Documented Need	Allowable for IEP/504 only	Allowable as a Stand-Alone Accommodation for English Learners	Available for Paper and Pencil Test	Available for Online Test	Provided by Online System	Unique (requires Assurance to PDE)
<a href="#">Read Aloud Some Math, Science, and Writing Items at Student Request</a>	X		X	X	X		
<a href="#">Read Aloud All Math, Science, and Writing Items</a>	X		X	X	X	X	
<a href="#">Read Aloud Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone</a>		X		X			X
<a href="#">Read Aloud to Self (Student)</a>	X		X	X	X		
<a href="#">Responding in Test Booklet</a>	X		X	X			
<a href="#">Scribing</a>	X		X	X	X		X 4-8 ELA only
<a href="#">Sensory/Self-Regulation Tool</a>	X			X	X		
<a href="#">Separate Setting</a>	X		X	X	X		
<a href="#">Small Group (1-5) (1-12)</a>	X		X	X	X		
<a href="#">Spanish Version</a>			X	X			
<a href="#">Test Administrators, Proctors, PCAs, TSS</a>	X		X	X	X		
<a href="#">Transcribe</a>	X		X	X	X		
<a href="#">Unique Accommodations</a>	X		X	X	X		X
<a href="#">Video Sign Language</a>		X			X	X	
<a href="#">Visual/Graphic Aids</a>	X		X	X	X	X	
<a href="#">Voice-to-text</a>		X		X	X		X

## TABLE B

### Accommodation Definitions and Procedures (Alphabetical Order – see Table A)

#### **Amplification Device**

##### *Presentation*

A device used to amplify the test administrator’s voice and/or the audio feature of the online test, such as a personal sound amplifier or classroom sound field FM system. For online testing with audio, students can control the volume.

The LEA must ensure that the use of the system does not interfere with other test takers. A one-to-one setting should be used if necessary.

Select “Amplification device” as a Presentation Accommodation.

#### **Assistance with Selecting Response**

##### *Response*

Intended for students who are unable to physically select multiple choice answers (including technology enhanced items) due to disability or injury. This accommodation must occur in a one-to-one setting. The test administrator can in no way prompt, cue, or influence the student’s response.

**Paper/pencil:** The test administrator marks the multiple-choice response at the student’s direction in the answer booklet or test/answer booklet.

**Online:** The test administrator marks the multiple-choice response at the student’s direction. This may include answering a technology enhanced item (drag and drop, drop-down box, hot text selection, etc.) at the student’s direction. Students should practice responding to multiple choice and technology enhanced items in the Online Training Tools. If a student has difficulty independently responding to technology enhanced items due to a visual or motor disability, an accommodated online form is available. Contact PDE at [RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov](mailto:RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov).

Select “Test administrator marked selected responses at student’s direction” as a Response Accommodation.

If a student needs assistance with open-ended items, see [Scribing](#) or [Transcribing](#).

## Assistive Technology Device

*Presentation*

*Response*

**As a Presentation Accommodation:** Assistive Technology Devices (ATD) include computer software and hardware, such as screen readers and screen enlargement applications (e.g., Kurzweil, Read & Write Gold, JAWS). ATD helps students with vision impairments or a disability that severely limits or prevents the student from accessing the test. Intended for students who do not access instructional and testing materials through typical means such as the hard copy test booklet. Screen readers should only be used for allowable parts of the test.

**As a Response Accommodation:** Assistive Technology Devices (ATD) include computer software and hardware, such as voice recognition and voice-to-text programs (e.g., Kurzweil, Read & Write Gold, Text Help, Dragon Naturally Speaking), screen enlargement applications, and devices to help perform navigation tasks. ADT helps students with mobility/sensory impairments, or a disability that severely limits or prevents the student from expressing written language even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. Intended for students who cannot access testing materials through the hard copy test booklet or the online test. Responses must be transcribed directly from the ADT screen into the student's regular test booklet or online test. Responses may not be sent to printer or emailed for printing.

NOTE: Online accommodations and tools, including audio, may provide sufficient support for testing; [see online tutorial](#). The online system may not be interoperable with most assistive devices and/or software, including screen readers and voice recognition or voice-to-text software. Most navigation tools are interoperable with the online system. Verify operability prior to testing.

If the assistive technology must have access to the internet to operate, the device must be securely configured. If the ADT unique accommodation is used, the SAC must disable the grammar, spelling, word prediction with topic specific dictionary, internet, thesaurus, dictionary and all other functions and stored files that might cue the student in any way. If the assistive technology must have access to the internet to operate, the device must be securely configured according to the [Supplemental Guidelines](#) for locking down a device.

ADT is not intended for the student who is simply performing below grade level. The student uses ADT routinely during classroom instruction and assessment in the tested subject area (before and after the test is administered). The use of ADT is documented in the student's IEP or 504 Plan. A Unique Accommodations Assurance must be submitted to PDE. [See Unique Accommodation Assurance](#).

Select "Assistive Technology Device— other than the online test mode" as a Presentation and Response Accommodation.

See also [Augmentative or Alternative Communication](#), [Calculator \(Adaptive\)](#), [Delayed Auditory Feedback DAF/ Pitch-shifting Frequency-altered Auditory Feedback FAF](#), etc. If ADT is used in coordination with other accommodations, guidelines for those accommodations must be followed.



## Audio for Math, Science, and Writing Items

### *Presentation*

The online audio function is limited to individual students who have a documented need for ALL or many of the allowable test items to be read aloud. The audio function is available for Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, Biology, multiple choice Conventions of Standard English items and the Text Dependent Analysis prompt. Audio is available in English only. The audio function includes text that is part of graphs, text boxes, diagrams, charts, and graphics.

The function must be selected during test set-up in the portal. The default of the online test is no audio. The student's online test ticket will indicate that audio is set up for the student. If the student starts the test without the accommodation, it cannot be turned on retroactively, so it is important to be sure the function is selected before testing starts. Students should practice with the audio function in the Online Tools Training before testing.

Audio requires the use of headphones and/or one-to-one setting to eliminate distraction to others. If headphones are used, the student may test with the general student population, or in a [small \(1-5\) or small \(1-12\) group](#). The student may press the start and stop buttons as needed.

Select "Audio" as an Online Accommodation, "All test items read aloud" as a Presentation Accommodation for Math, Science, Algebra, and Biology, and "All conventions questions/text-dependent analysis prompts read aloud" as a Presentation Accommodation for ELA

If using a human reader, see [Read-Aloud All Math, Science and Writing Items](#) or [Read Aloud Some Math, Science, and Writing Items](#).

## Audio of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone

### *Presentation*

**Note: Audio for Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone will be available starting in Spring 2025. For Winter Keystone 2024-2025, see [Read Aloud for Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone](#).**

Audio of the full ELA test, including passages, test items, and directions, is appropriate as a unique accommodation for the student who meets the criteria below. This accommodation is intended for a student who has a disability that precludes the student from accessing printed text. The need for this accommodation must be documented through locally administered diagnostic evaluations. The accommodation must be documented in the IEP/504 plan and used consistently in classroom instruction and assessment.

When determining the need for this accommodation, it is important to consider the purpose of the assessment the student will be taking and the reading skills the assessment is intending to measure, as well as how the accommodation may affect the results. This accommodation is intended for a student who is a non-reader, not simply reading below grade level. For this reason, Audio of the Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone will not be appropriate for every student who receives the Read Aloud or Audio of All Math, Science, and Writing Items accommodation on the math and science PSSAs/Algebra and Biology keystones.

A student who uses the Audio of Full PSSA/Literature Keystone accommodation must:

- Have a documented disability that severely limits or prevents that student's ability to decode text and derive meaning from text even when repeated and varied evidence-based interventions and instruction are used to teach the student to decode.
- Only access print materials with a screen reader, audio, a human reader, or other Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) during classroom instruction and assessment.

See [Appendix C](#) for examples of students who may and may not be eligible for this accommodation.

Testing with this accommodation will increase testing time and create an artificial pace for the student. A student who does not regularly receive this accommodation in the classroom as part of regular instruction and assessment may experience frustration or lack of motivation because of the time and pacing. Offering this accommodation to a student who does not meet the criteria above may result in inaccurate test scores.

Because reading aloud all test items creates an artificial pace, the online audio version of the test must be considered for a student who requires a read aloud of the full ELA test. This allows the student optimal control in moving through the test at an independent pace. The student may individually listen to a question being read aloud more than once as needed. If testing online, the audio function of the online test must be used. Human readers may not read aloud ALL allowable test items for online testers. If a student does need a human reader on the paper/pencil test, see [Read Aloud for Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone](#) for more information.

Audio is available in English only. The audio function includes text that is part of graphs, text boxes, diagrams, charts, and graphics.

The function must be selected during test set-up in the portal. The default of the online test is no audio. The student's online test ticket will indicate that audio is set up for the student. If the student starts the test without the accommodation, it cannot be turned on retroactively, so it is important to be sure the function is selected before testing starts. Students should practice with the audio function in the Online Tools Training before testing.

Audio requires the use of headphones and/or one-to-one setting to eliminate distraction to others. If headphones are used, the student may test with the general student population, or in a [small \(1-5\) or small \(1-12\) group](#). The student may press the start and stop buttons as needed.

Select "Audio" as an Online Accommodation and "All test items read aloud" as a Presentation Accommodation.

This accommodation requires the submission of a [Unique Accommodation Assurance](#).

## **Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC)**

### *Response*

AAC can include forms of communication (other than oral speech) that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas. AAC is augmentative when used to supplement existing speech, and alternative when used in place of speech that is absent or not functional.

An assurance submission to PDE is required for AAC devices with internet connectivity. See [Unique Accommodation Assurance](#). If the AAC is able to access the internet, the device must be securely configured. See [Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lock-Down](#). The online system is not interoperable with AAC devices.

The SAC must disable the grammar, spelling, word prediction with topic specific dictionary, internet, thesaurus, dictionary and all other functions and stored files that might cue the student in any way.

Select “Augmentative communication device” as a Response Accommodation.

Responses must be transcribed into the student’s regular test booklet or online platform. Follow guidelines for [transcription](#).

See also [Assistive Technology Device](#)

## Braille, Refreshable Braille, Brailier, Note Taker

*Presentation*

*Response*

Braille versions must be ordered in the DRC enrollment system. Responses must be transcribed verbatim into the student's regular answer booklet. **New for 2025: The online audio accommodation will no longer be compatible with the paper braille form. Students requiring the paper braille test and audio will need to utilize a human reader. [See Read Aloud of All Math, Science, and Writing items.](#)** The IEP team determines if a read-aloud is appropriate for the student to use along with the braille version.

**Refreshable Braille:** The online test engine is compatible with a refreshable braille device that works with Job Access with Speech (JAWS). The JAWS website is [Freedom Scientific JAWS website](#) and is a valuable source to evaluate which refreshable braille devices are compatible. Students requiring the refreshable braille test and audio will need to utilize a human reader. The IEP team determines if a read-aloud is appropriate for the student to use along with the braille version. Contact DRC to use refreshable braille. Students will be provided with the paper braille booklet to access any graphics. Refreshable braille enrollment will prompt the shipment of a matching paper braille booklet. This booklet must be accounted for and returned to DRC. (Note: Refreshable braille is not available for the Classroom Diagnostic Tool (CDT) due to its adaptive functionality.)

Select "Braille format" as a Presentation Accommodation and "Brailier/Note taker" and "Test administrator transcribed student responses" as Response Accommodations. Select "Refreshable Braille" in the online portal.

## Broken Arm/Injury

*Other*

Many students with an injury that interferes with their ability to mark/write their own test answers have already developed a way to respond to instructional materials and assessments using the non-injured arm/hand, either through paper/pencil or through keyboarding if the injury has occurred before testing. Continuing this adaptation allows the best opportunity for students to independently think and respond to test questions.

If the student needs an accommodation due to injury, the following may be considered:

- If the student can type and use a device, the student can take the online test, even if the school tests paper/pencil. Call DRC to set up.
- Keyboarding or use of non-injured hand is allowed for all subject areas. [See guidelines for transcription.](#)
- If student is unable to use the non-injured arm/hand and must use scribing (dictation), all [scribing](#) guidelines apply.

Include the student in decisions regarding how best to respond to test questions. Use the accommodation that most allows the student to work independently.

Record the accommodation in the student's record folder, with a doctor's note if available.

## Calculators (Adaptive)

### *Response*

Not permitted for the Grade 3 Mathematics Test. Not permitted for the non-calculator section of the Grade 4-8 Math PSSA.

Calculators may be used for the calculator permitted sections of the Grades 4-8 Mathematics test and for all questions on the Algebra I Keystone Exam. Students may use calculators for the Science and Biology tests, including graphing calculators. However, calculators are not mandatory for the Science and Biology tests.

All calculators must meet the guidelines in the [Pennsylvania Calculator Policy](#).

Some students with an IEP or 504 Plan may require the use of an adaptive calculator (e.g., large keypad, paper multiplication chart). These may only be used on portions of the test that allow a calculator. The use of calculator apps on devices (e.g., iPad, Chromebook, etc.) requires an assurance to PDE. See [Unique Accommodation Assurance](#). Students using a [paper multiplication chart](#) **must** use the one provided in these guidelines.

The DESMOS calculator can be installed for use during instruction on the [DESMOS for PA testing page](#). The online tool calculator available is available as part of the test system. Calculator apps should only be accessed on portions of the test that allow a calculator. The online tool calculator is not available during the non-calculator sections of the test. A Unique Accommodation Assurance does not have to be submitted for using the DESMOS calculator.

The online system is not interoperable with other assistive calculators.

## Changed Test Schedule

### *Timing*

The test may be administered at a time of day that accommodates a student's medical or learning needs.

Some schools schedule more than one test session in a single day, and a student may require single day sessions to accommodate medical or learning needs. Select this accommodation if the test was administered to the student on a different schedule than the general testing population. (This does not include make up testing for absences).

Select "Changed test schedule" as a Timing Accommodation.

## **Color Chooser/Contrast; Color Overlay for Color Blindness or Visual Disability**

### *Presentation*

Some students benefit from a color overlay, background, or contrast. The SAC may allow the student to view the front cover of the grade level answer booklet to determine if the student can see the print before testing begins. PSSA ELA 4-8 and Keystone Literature answer booklets have grade-specific color-on-white printing. All other test booklets and combined test/answer booklets are printed in black-on-white with grade-specific color headings.

If a student is unable to use the answer booklet due to the color of the print, the student may mark answers in the test booklet; the SAC transcribes verbatim the responses into matching answer booklet bubbles (see [Transcribe](#)).

For online testing, the student's online test ticket will indicate that the color chooser is set up for the student. If the student starts the test without the accommodation, it cannot be turned on retroactively, so it is important to be sure the function is selected before testing starts. Students should practice with the color chooser function in the Online Tools Training before testing. The online test colors default to black text on a white background with blue navigation buttons.

Select "Color Overlay" as a Presentation Accommodation. Select "Color Chooser," "Contrasting Text Chooser," and/or "Reverse Contrast" in the online portal.

## Concussion

### *Other*

If a student has been diagnosed with a concussive injury **within 2 weeks** prior to testing, and there is current medical documentation stating the student may not participate in standardized testing, the student should be coded as “Recent Medical Emergency” on the front page of the booklet. Documentation covers all subject area tests following the injury. This does not impact the school’s participation rate.

If a student has been diagnosed with a concussive injury **more than 2 weeks** prior to testing, and there is medical documentation **within 2 weeks** of the testing window that states the student may not participate in standardized testing, the student should be coded as “Recent Medical Emergency” on the front page of the booklet. This does not impact the school’s participation rate.

If there is **not** recent medical documentation (within two weeks of the testing window) stating that the student may not participate in standardized testing, and the school still determines that the student cannot or should not participate in the test due to his/her medical condition, the school must attach the student’s precode label and return the booklet with no student responses. The school assessment coordinator should bubble in “Other” on page 1 of the answer booklet. This will have a negative effect on a school’s participation rate. Federal Accountability requires at least a 95% participation rate to meet guidelines. Provided that the number of students not testing remains reasonable (5% or under), a school will meet requirements for participation rate.

Note: “Recent Medical Emergency” bubble does not override a completed section in the answer booklet. Call PDE for directions if the student has partially completed a section(s) before injury occurs.

If a student has been diagnosed with a concussive injury prior to testing, and there is medical documentation **within 2 weeks** of the testing window that states the student may participate in standardized testing with accommodations, students may be granted those accommodations with medical documentation. Follow guidelines for each accommodation.

## Cueing System for On Task Behavior

### *Presentation*

Some students benefit from a systematic approach to staying on task, e.g., tapping on desk, hand signals, etc. Cueing should NOT be used to cue students to a correct answer. It should also not be used to cue students about how to complete a task or encourage them to write or do more on a task.

## Delayed Auditory Feedback (DAF) / Pitch-shifting Frequency-altered Auditory Feedback (FAF)

### *Presentation*

Intended for those students with a speech-auditory disability that precludes them from accessing instructional and testing materials without the use of a feedback device.

Testing environment is [one-to-one](#) due to the nature of this accommodation. Requires an assurance submission to PDE. See [Unique Accommodation Assurance](#)

The DAF/FAF application must be securely configured in lock-down mode. See [Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lock-Down](#).

## De-spiral Test Booklets

### *Setting*

De-spiraling, or distributing the test booklets out of sequenced order, is **ONLY** allowed for the PSSA or Keystone tests when **ALL** math, science, or writing test items must be read aloud, and only in a small group (no more than 5 students) setting. This practice interferes with valid and reliable test data. It is very important that all students be represented on all different forms of the PSSA and Keystone tests. Otherwise, a particular group (e.g., students with an IEP) may be under-represented on field test data. It is also important to remember that de-spiraling could precipitate a test security breach.

Accommodating students who need only **SOME** test items read aloud does not warrant de-spiraling. De-spiraling the test forms is a special exception that must be documented and may **NOT** be done by the test administrator (i.e., the classroom teacher). Only assessment coordinators are permitted to de-spiral any test booklets.

This exception is intended to assist those buildings that may have an unusually high number of students with an IEP who require **all math, science, and writing items** to be read aloud by a human reader. PDE recognizes that this unusual circumstance may cause a hardship for both students and test administrators if the students all had a different form of the test that needed to be read aloud. Therefore, the SAC may de-spiral booklets for the small group read aloud of all test items. Please contact PDE for more clarification if needed.

Note that students using the audio feature imbedded in online testing with headphones are not required to test in small groups and therefore de-spiraling is not required.

Note that students meeting the requirements for a human reader for the full ELA PSSA/Keystone Literature assessment must be tested in a one-to-one setting; therefore, test booklets will not need to be de-spiraled.



## **Dictionary**

### *Response*

EL students only. Not allowed for any part of the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone tests.

LEA provides word-to-word translation dictionaries and subject specific translation sheets without definitions and pictures for EL students. Dictionaries may not be web-based.

Select “Translation dictionary for EL student” as a Response Accommodation.

See [Accommodations Guidelines for ELs for more details and sample resources](#)

## **Enlarged Print**

### *Presentation*

### *Response*

The paper/pencil enlarged print book is printed in 18-point font. It is an exact replica of the paper/pencil test pages. Math measurement graphics are not enlarged. An enlarged ruler/protractor is not provided. Students should use a high contrast or tactile ruler/protractor as used in instruction.

For students requiring an enlarged paper/pencil test booklet in Spanish, the district or school assessment coordinator must contact DRC Customer Service at least 8 weeks before the testing window to order a Spanish enlarged test book.

Student responses must be transcribed into a regular answer booklet by the school assessment coordinator or designee. See [Transcribe](#). Both booklets must be returned to DRC. The enlarged test must be ordered through DRC; it may not be enlarged locally.

Select “Large-print Format” as a Presentation Accommodation.

For online testing, the image will always fill as much of the screen as it can while still maintaining the 4:3 ratio; therefore, an oversized monitor will display the image accordingly and may eliminate the need for an enlarged print book. The student should use the [online test tutorial](#) to determine effectiveness well before the testing window. Students with visual-motor disability may need to utilize the [Monitor Test Response](#) or [Assistance with Selecting Response](#) accommodations, especially with technology-enhanced items. This can be determined by practicing with technology enhanced items on the online test tutorial. If a student with a visual-motor disability is still unable to respond to technology enhanced items with these accommodations in the online test tutorial, then the enlarged print paper/pencil booklet may be considered, or an accommodated online form is available. Contact PDE at [RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov](mailto:RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov).

## Extended Time

### *Timing*

Keystone and PSSA tests are untimed; therefore, any student may be given additional time beyond the scheduled test session. Students may request extended time beyond the regular test time as long as they are working productively.

Students must have sufficient time to complete a section prior to the end of the school day. Students may not revisit a section of the test on subsequent days. Test sections should be scheduled in sequence.

Since the Keystone and PSSA are untimed tests, decisions must be made prior to testing that take into consideration the student's typical test-taking time requirements. For example, if the student typically remains with the regular test population during assessments, it might not be necessary to provide extended time beyond which the regular test population receives. However, it is imperative that each student's profile is given close consideration when determining the amount of extended time required and to provide that student with extended time beyond the regular untimed test situation. Students identified prior to testing for extended time should be assigned to a separate setting for testing in order to prevent disruption in the regular scheduled testing area(s).

Select "Extended time" as a Timing Accommodation.

**Extraordinary Time** – In rare cases, a student may not be able to finish the test in one day by any other means. In this case, a student may be granted "extraordinary time" and the test session may span into the following day. The student must be reminded not to talk about the test to any other students. The student must be monitored closely to prevent changing any answers to items already completed. For this reason, students using the extraordinary time accommodation must test in a one-to-one environment. The use of extraordinary time requires the submission of a [Unique Accommodations Assurance](#) to PDE and can be marked as "other". An assurance is **not** required for regular extended time.

## Frequent Breaks

### *Timing*

Refers to frequent breaks within a regularly scheduled test session.

Do not mark "Frequent breaks" bubble for regular breaks between sections or modules of a test.

Consider a separate setting for students who require frequent breaks within a test section, e.g., every 15 minutes. Students must be monitored during all breaks.

Select "Frequent breaks" as a Timing Accommodation.

## **Glucose/Medical Monitoring with a Smartphone or Smartwatch**

### *Setting*

Some medical devices, such as blood glucose monitors and medical alert devices, are synchronized and/or accessed through a smartphone or smartwatch that is always in the student's possession for medical reasons.

- SAC must be notified of student's need.
- The student's phone or device may remain on the student's desk on silent mode in plain view of the Test Administrator.
- TA must ensure the student does not access the device for any other reason. The TA should work with the student to ensure all other notifications are off so as not to distract the student or other test takers.

Medical Plan and/or documentation regarding this accommodation is retained by the school. Use of this accommodation requires an assurance submission to PDE. See [Unique Accommodation Assurance](#).

If a Personal Care Aide (PCA) or nurse must be in the room for medical monitoring, see [Test Administrators, Proctors, PCAs, TSS](#). If the student does not have the device in the testing room (e.g., it is kept in the nurse's office and monitored remotely), this accommodation should not be selected.

Select "Smartphone or smartwatch for medical/glucose monitoring" as a Setting Accommodation.

## **Hospital/Home**

### *Setting*

Arrangements should be made to allow for the testing of a student who is a patient in a hospital or who is confined to the home during the testing period and is receiving educational services. All students who are receiving educational services should be tested. It is the LEA's responsibility to ensure testing occurs.

The LEA must provide a secure location for daily return of test materials by the test administrator.

Select "Hospital/home setting" as a Setting Accommodation.

## Interpret/translate

### *Presentation*

**Interpreters and Translators:** Interpreters may interpret the online testing tutorial to familiarize students with the allowable tools that may be utilized during the assessment. Interpreters may preview assessment materials up to 3 days prior to test administration in a secure location with a signed Confidentiality Agreement. Any notes taken to prepare for interpretation must be kept in a secure location with testing materials and must be destroyed after testing. Schools using online testing may call DRC for a log-in for interpreter/translator preparation.

**Sign Language:** LEA provides qualified educational sign language interpreter. The Video Sign Language (VSL) version is available for the Math and Science PSSAs and Algebra and Biology Keystones for Spring and Winter administrations. VSL is not available for the Summer Keystone administration. If students use the online VSL accommodation, the Educational Sign Language Interpreter may be present during the assessment to guarantee access for clarification(s), and/or interpretation(s) as per allowable accommodations.

**Native Language:** LEA provides qualified native language interpreter/ translator. ELs enrolled in U.S. schools for fewer than 3 years are eligible. Interpreters/translators providing this accommodation should be literate and fluent in English, as well as the student's native language. Spanish-English versions of the paper/pencil Math, Science, Algebra, and Biology tests are available. English Learners enrolled in a U.S. school for fewer than 12 cumulative months may be waived from the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone. [See the Accommodations Guidelines for English Learners](#)

Test Directions may be interpreted/translated for all tests. Test items may only be interpreted/translated for Math, Algebra I, Science, and Biology, and the TDA prompts ONLY for the grades 4-8 ELA PSSA. No other part of the ELA test including Conventions of Standard English items, reading passages and associated short answer and multiple-choice questions may be interpreted or translated. No part of the Keystone Literature exam may be interpreted or translated. Interpreters/translators may not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, assist, or cue a student through uneven voice inflection or description or through signing and non-manual expressions. They must follow the [Read Aloud and Scribing Guidelines](#).

Select "Test item/question signed" or "test item/question interpreted for EL" or "Text-dependent analysis prompts signed" or "text-dependent analysis prompts interpreted for EL" as a Presentation Accommodation. Select "Qualified interpreter translated, transcribed, and/or scribed student's signed responses" or "Qualified interpreter translated, transcribed, and/or scribed EL student responses" as a Response Accommodation.

See additional information in [Video Sign Language \(VSL\) Test Version Guidelines](#).

## Keyboarding, Typing

### *Response*

The online test must be considered for students who prefer/need to type open-ended responses. Individual students may take an online version even if the rest of the district or school is paper testing. Online testing should not be marked as an accommodation. The online system may not be interoperable with assistive devices and/or software.

In some cases, a student's accommodation may require testing on paper/pencil AND using a keyboard or word processing device. In other cases, a student may test online but require the use of a separate word processing device (e.g., NEO AlphaSmart). In this case, responses for open-ended questions are separately typed and must be transcribed verbatim directly from the device into the student's answer booklet or online platform by school assessment coordinator or designee. [Transcription](#) guidelines must be followed.

Use of spell/grammar checker, autocorrect, word prediction with topic specific dictionary functions, internet functions, stored files, and other supports is not allowed. Use of a laptop or tablet for typing a response requires a secure lock-down of the device. See [Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lock-Down](#)

Select "Keyboard, word processor, or computer—does not apply to online testing" as a Response Accommodation.

## Magnification

### *Presentation*

A student may use a magnifying tool for a visual disability, e.g., CCTV, handheld magnifier, test engine magnifier tool.

The online test engine magnifier tool enlarges to the whole screen. For online testing, the image will always fill as much of the screen as it can while still maintaining the 4:3 ratio; therefore, an oversized monitor will display the image accordingly and may eliminate the need for an enlarged print book or additional magnification tool. The student should use the [online test tutorial](#) to determine effectiveness well before the testing window. Students with visual-motor disability may need to utilize the [Monitor Test Response](#) or [Assistance in Selecting Response](#) accommodations, especially with technology-enhanced items. This can be determined by practicing with technology enhanced items on the online test tutorial. If a student with a visual-motor disability is still unable to respond to technology enhanced items with these accommodations in the online test tutorial, then the enlarged print paper/pencil booklet may be considered or an accommodated online form is available. Contact PDE at [RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov](mailto:RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov).

Select "Magnification device" as a Presentation Accommodation.

See [also Enlarged Print](#).

## Math Manipulatives

### *Response*

A ruler is provided for Grade 3 students. A protractor is provided for Grade 4 students. For students taking the test on paper, a ruler or protractor is provided. For students taking the test online, the system has a built-in ruler or protractor. A high contrast ruler/protractor or tactile ruler/protractor may be used for students with an IEP or 504 and must be provided by the LEA. High contrast/tactile rulers provided by the LEA for the Grade 3 Math PSSA should measure 6 inches at 1/8-inch increments, and 15 centimeters at 1/10 centimeter increments. High contrast/tactile protractors provided by the LEA for the Grade 4 Math PSSA should show 0-180 degrees both clockwise and counterclockwise. No math tools are provided with Keystone Exam materials; student may use a straight edge tool (*not* a ruler) for the Algebra I exam.

Cranmer abacus and *Math Window* may be used for Braille users only.

A number grid or hundreds chart is not allowable. Teacher created manipulatives are not permitted on any portion of the PSSA or Keystone exams.

## Mixed-Mode Response

### *Response*

An online tester may use a paper booklet for constructed responses. This is intended for students who benefit from online testing but may have limited or no capacity for extended keyboarding. Students who are unable to type their own open-ended response(s) into the online version of the test but can handwrite a response may now respond to all multiple-choice questions online and may respond to open-ended questions on paper using their own handwriting. Scribing and transcribing are not used with mixed-mode. The student tests independently. This approach allows students to think and respond without test administrator interference.

Student must respond to all multiple-choice items online and all open-ended responses in matching paper booklet with student label affixed. No multiple-choice responses in the paper booklet will be used for the student's score with this option. SAC should draw an X over each set of response bubbles to prevent the student from responding to multiple-choice questions in the paper booklet. **Do not allow students to mark multiple choice responses in the paper booklet.** No open-ended responses entered into the online system will be used for a student score with this option.

SAC is responsible for obtaining an answer booklet with matching test form number. LEAs that are 100% online and need a paper booklet will contact DRC.

Select the "Multiple-choice items completed online; open-ended items completed in the answer booklet" Response Accommodation.

## Monitor Test Response

### *Response*

This accommodation is intended for a small number of students with documented need, such as visual-motor disability, who may require a test administrator to monitor placement of their responses on the bubble sheet or online test to ensure they respond to the question in the intended space.

**Paper/pencil:** When using this accommodation, the test administrator may bring blanks and/or incorrect placement of student responses on the answer sheet to student's attention (e.g., "Check to make sure you have matched answer number 12 with question number 12." or "Please make sure you have answered all questions.") Test administrator may not point to test items on student's test or answer booklet. This accommodation may not be needed on tests that are single book (e.g., Grade 3 ELA PSSAs, all Math and Science PSSAs and Keystones).

**Online:** Students with a documented need, such as visual-motor disability, may need confirmation when responding to technology enhanced Items (e.g. drag and drop, drop down box, hot text selection, etc.). When using this accommodation, the test administrator may check to ensure that the student has chosen the intended response or answered the question in the intended way. (e.g., "You placed the comma after the word 'said.'" or "You selected the box labeled 'one-half.'") The test administrator may not point to test items on the computer screen.

If a student needs assistance in responding to paper/pencil or online/technology enhanced items, see [Assistance with Selecting Response](#).

## Noise Canceling Headphones

### *Setting*

Some students benefit from wearing noise buffers to minimize distraction and maximize concentration. The headphones/earplugs may not be connected to Bluetooth or any other connection that may allow for information to be conveyed to the student during the assessment.

Select "Other" as a Setting Accommodation.

## **One-to-One Setting**

### *Setting*

Some students benefit from a separate setting to reduce distractions and/or provide read aloud, signing, or translation. Scribing, audio without headphones, and other accommodations require a one-to-one setting. See the specific accommodation for more information.

Select “One-to-One setting” as a Setting Accommodation.

## **Read Aloud Test Directions**

### *Presentation*

Read aloud of the test directions is included in the [Paper and Online Directions for Administration Manuals](#). This is standard and not bubbled as an accommodation.

The Test Administrator (TA) may provide clarification of test directions and/or direct the student to the correct section of the test.

Test readers must ensure that all students understand what is expected of them when reading test directions aloud. Students must have an opportunity to ask questions and understand how to mark their answers before they begin taking the test. Test readers should be prepared to answer questions about item format, scoring rules, and timing. However, test readers should not answer questions about specific test items. Test readers may NOT read assessment directions associated with test items appearing in the actual test booklet (e.g., “Read the following passage about wild ponies. Then answer questions 1–10” or “Use the figure below to answer question 00.”)



## Read Aloud Some Math, Science, and Writing Items at Student Request

### *Presentation*

It is permissible for a human reader to read aloud a word, phrase, sentence, or test item(s), as requested by the student for both the paper version and online version without audio accommodation, for the Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, and Biology tests, and multiple choice Conventions of Standard English items, and the Text Dependent Analysis prompt for the ELA PSSA test. No reading passages or items besides the TDA may be read aloud on the ELA PSSA. No items may be read aloud on the Literature Keystone.

Readers may not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, provide assistance to, or cue a student through uneven voice inflection.

Students who do not need ALL items read aloud, but who are anticipated to need SOME allowable items read aloud, may be placed in a [small group setting](#).

It is important to not take the read aloud feature out of context. As a test feature, the PSSA has always allowed, at student request, the reading aloud of certain items that do not measure reading. This was intended to ensure that the measurement of non-reading content was not influenced by a student's inability to decode words. In other words, the student knows how to do the math, but cannot decode the word "perpendicular". This is not a part of the DFA; therefore, the TA does not announce to the test takers that questions will be read aloud for the students. This feature is there to help ensure a valid measurement of the content if a student should ask to have an allowable (non-reading) word pronounced. For example, it must be the test taker's initiative to ask to have "perpendicular" read aloud—it is not the TA's decision to interfere in the testing process and read "perpendicular" aloud because it will help a particular student or group of students.

When reading test items aloud, test readers must be careful not to inadvertently give clues that indicate the correct answer or help eliminate some answer choices. Readers should use even inflection so that the student does not receive any cues by the way the information is read. It is important for readers to read test items/questions and text word-for-word, exactly as written. Readers may not clarify, elaborate, or provide assistance to students. All test readers must follow the [Read Aloud and Scribing Guidelines for Operational Assessments](#).

Select "Some test items read aloud" for Math, Science, Algebra and Biology. Select "Some conventions questions/text-dependent analysis prompts read aloud" for ELA.

See "[Read Aloud ALL Math, Science, and Writing Items](#)" for students who need the entire test read aloud. See also "[Audio](#)" for online testing.

## Read Aloud All Math, Science, and Writing Items

### *Presentation*

Because reading aloud all test items creates an artificial pace, the online audio version of the test must be considered for students who require a read aloud of all or most of the test items on the Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, and Biology tests, multiple choice Conventions of Standard English items and the Text Dependent Analysis prompt on the ELA PSSA. This allows students optimal independence in moving through the test at their own pace. The student may individually listen to a question being read aloud more than once as needed. If testing online, when a read aloud of ALL Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, or Biology is required, the audio function of the online test **must** be used. Human readers may not read aloud ALL allowable test items for online testers. See [Audio for All Math, Science and Writing Items](#) for more information.

Teachers should work closely with special education students to identify those students who need the most intensive intervention of having all allowable test items read aloud by the test administrator. These are the students (no more than 5 in a group for human read aloud) who may need the same form of the test read aloud to them by the test administrator. Keep in mind that reading aloud all test items to a group of students may artificially pace the students. Some students may be reluctant to ask the reader to slow down or repeat the question in a group setting.

- Allowable for the Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, and Biology tests; multiple choice Conventions of Standard English items, and the Text Dependent Analysis prompt on the ELA PSSA.
- Should be used as intensive intervention for a few students only who receive this intervention regularly.
- Must follow guidelines for [Small Group \(1-5\)](#) for reading aloud of ALL math, science, writing items.
- Multiple students with this accommodation in the same room must have the same test form number. See [De-spiraling](#).
- Only principal and/or SAC are permitted to de-spiral any test booklets (individual test administrators may NOT de-spiral test booklets)
- The principal and/or school assessment coordinator must work closely with the special education teacher to supervise the assignment of students to groups that will have all test questions read aloud to them.

Occasionally, a non-IEP student requires all Math, Science, and Writing test items to be read aloud. This may be a student who has not yet been identified as needing special services and may be included in the small group of 1-5 with IEP students. Documentation must be kept in the student record of the need for this intensive accommodation for both instruction and assessment. [Tools 5 and 7](#) may be used for record keeping. If the student does not require a read aloud of all math or science items for instruction, then the student does not require a read aloud of all math or science items for the PSSA or Keystone tests.

Readers may not clarify, elaborate, paraphrase, assist, or cue a student through uneven voice inflection. All test readers must follow the [Read Aloud and Scribing Guidelines for Operational Assessments](#).

Note: Students will arrive at the Text Dependent Analysis prompt at different times; therefore, the student must request to have the TDA prompt read aloud individually at that time.

Select “All test items read aloud” as a Presentation Accommodation for Math, Science, Algebra, and Biology. Select “All conventions questions/text-dependent analysis prompts read aloud” as a Presentation Accommodation for ELA.

## **Read Aloud of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone**

### *Presentation*

A read-aloud of the full ELA test, including passages, test items, and directions, is appropriate as a unique accommodation for the student who meets the criteria below. This accommodation is intended for a student who has a disability that precludes the student from accessing printed text. The need for this accommodation must be documented through locally administered diagnostic evaluations. The accommodation must be documented in the IEP/504 plan and used consistently in classroom instruction and assessment.

When determining the need for this accommodation, it is important to consider the purpose of the assessment the student will be taking and the reading skills the assessment is intending to measure, as well as how the accommodation may affect the results. This accommodation is intended for a student who is a non-reader, not simply reading below grade level. For this reason, a Read Aloud of the Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone will not be appropriate for every student who receives the Read Aloud of All Math, Science, and Writing Items accommodation on the math and science PSSAs/Algebra and Biology keystones.

A student who uses the Read Aloud of Full PSSA/Literature Keystone accommodation must:

- Have a documented disability that severely limits or prevents that student’s ability to decode text and derive meaning from text even when repeated and varied evidence-based interventions and instruction are used to teach the student to decode.
- Only access print materials with a screen reader, audio, a human reader, or other Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) during classroom instruction and assessment.

See [Appendix C](#) for examples of students who may and may not be eligible for this accommodation.

Testing with this accommodation will increase testing time and create an artificial pace for the student. A student who does not regularly receive this accommodation in the classroom as part of regular instruction and assessment may experience frustration or lack of motivation because of the time and pacing. Offering this accommodation to a student who does not meet the criteria above may result in inaccurate test scores.

Testing with this accommodation must be administered in a one-to-one setting with a human reader. Students must have the option to ask the reader to slow down or repeat text. For this reason, small group with de-spiraling is not allowable for this accommodation. The human reader must follow the [Read-aloud and Scribing Guidelines for Operational Assessments \(pa.gov\)](#).

Because reading aloud all test items creates an artificial pace, the online audio version of the test must be considered for a student who requires a read aloud of the full ELA test. This allows the student optimal independence in moving through the test at an independent pace. The student may

individually listen to a question being read aloud more than once as needed. If testing online, the audio function of the online test **must** be used. Human readers may not read aloud ALL allowable test items for online testers. See [Audio for Full ELA PSSA/Literature](#) Keystone for more information.

This accommodation requires the submission of a [Unique Accommodation Assurance](#).

Select “All test items read aloud” on the ELA or Literature exam as a Presentation Accommodation.

### **Read Aloud to Self (Student)**

#### *Presentation*

Student reads test aloud to self (may also use a whisper phone) and writes answers in answer booklet.

Whisper phones and reading to self can be distracting to those students who are not reading aloud. An optimal testing environment for all students must be provided, therefore it is not recommended to have students read aloud to themselves in a quiet testing area with other students. Some rooms may be large enough to allow a student to use a whisper phone out of hearing-range to other testers in the room. SAC must make that determination according to the testing environment being used. If space does not allow for the student to use the whisper phone out of hearing-range of other testers in the room, the student should test in a [one-to-one setting](#).

See also [DAF/FAF](#).

### **Responding in Test Booklet**

#### *Response*

Intended for students who are unable to bubble in responses.

Responses must be transcribed verbatim into the student’s answer booklet by the school assessment coordinator or designee.

This accommodation may not be needed on tests that are single book (e.g., Grade 3 ELA PSSA, all Math and Science PSSAs, Algebra I and Biology keystones.).

## Scribing

### *Response*

Student dictates or signs open-ended/constructed response to qualified educational sign language interpreter, qualified native language interpreter, or designated test administrator. Scribing requires a [one-to-one](#) setting so that students are neither distracted nor influenced by other students' responses.

Intended for a student with a physical disability or injury that severely limits or prevents the student's motor process of handwriting or keyboarding; OR a disability that severely limits or prevents the student from expressing written language, even after varied and repeated attempts to teach the student to do so. District must retain IEP/504/student record documentation as evidence for this accommodation. LEA ensures the valid use of scribing for the TDA prompt.

Before using a human scribe (dictation) the LEA/school must consider one of the following:

- take the online test. Individual students may take an online version even if the rest of the district or school is paper testing. In some cases, a student's disability or injury may allow them to type their responses if they cannot handwrite.
- use keyboarding for transcription on the paper test. (See [Transcribe](#))
- use the [Mixed-Mode](#)

Responses must be scribed verbatim in English directly in student's regular answer booklet by SAC or designated test administrator (not by the educational sign language interpreter). After the scribe completes the response, the student must be given the opportunity to review the response. The test administrator may not in any way correct or prompt the student to make a correction. The student is solely responsible for determining if the text accurately reflects what they said. A scribe may enter student's dictated responses directly into online test **ONLY** when the student has no other means of responding to open-ended responses. Scribe must sign the [Test Security Certification](#) form (located in the HAC).

Scribing (paper and online) for the PSSA science, math, and grade 3 ELA short answer items and any Keystone Exams does not require submission of the Unique Accommodations Assurance Form because these items do not measure writing standards.

**FOR ELA Grades 4-8 (TDA) ONLY:** Scribing interferes with measurement of independent writing skills. Due to test security and item response validity, scribing (paper and online) for grades 4-8 PSSA ELA Text Dependent Analysis Essays requires the LEA to complete an assurance submission to PDE. See [Unique Accommodation Assurance](#).

If the student needs a scribe for multiple choice, see [Assistance with Selected Response](#). Scribing may interfere with student response to any test item as well as prevent students from moving at their own pace, thinking deeply, and responding independently.

All LEA/school scribes must follow the [Read-Aloud and Scribing Guidelines for Operational Assessments](#) posted on the PDE website and on eDIRECT.

Select “Test administrator scribed open-ended responses at student’s direction” as a Response Accommodation.

Also see [Broken Arm/Injury](#). For dictation to software, see [Voice-to-Text](#) and [Transcribe](#).

ELs enrolled in U.S. schools for fewer than 3 years are eligible to dictate non-English responses to a qualified native language interpreter for Mathematics, Algebra I, Science, and Biology tests. Interpreters may not translate student dictated responses to open-ended items on the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone Exam from a non-English language into English, including short answer responses, TDA responses, and constructed responses. See [Interpret/Translate](#).

### **Sensory/Self-Regulation Tool**

#### *Setting*

A student who requires an object or tool for sensory and/or self-regulation (i.e. a fidget) may use a small item during state assessment. The sensory/self-regulation tool should not make noise or be a distraction to the student or other students in the room. If the team feels the tool will create a distraction, a separate one-to-one setting must be used. Students may not use a sensory/self-regulation tool that could double as a manipulative or visual aid on the test (e.g., a 10x10 pop-it grid could be used as a math manipulative and therefore may not be used on the test).

Select “Other” as a Setting Accommodation.

## **Separate Setting**

### *Setting*

Some students benefit from a separate setting to reduce distractions for themselves and others.

See [One-to-One Setting](#) or [Small Group](#)

## **Small Group (1-5) (1-12)**

### *Setting*

Small group of 1-5 must be used for read-aloud, signing, or translation of ALL Mathematics, Algebra, Science, Biology, multiple-choice Conventions of Standard English items and TDA prompt. Small groups of 1-5 can be used for distractibility, and/or other unique needs.

Small groups of 1-12 can be used for students who require a separate setting to reduce distractions, provide scheduled extended time, or provide a read aloud for SOME allowable test items.

For any accommodation where a student's responses are verbalized aloud, a [one-to-one setting](#) must be used. This includes scribing, use of AAC, voice-to-text, etc.

Select "Small group setting" as a Setting Accommodation.

## **Spanish Version**

*Presentation*

*Response*

ELs enrolled in U.S. schools for 3 years or less are eligible to take a Spanish version of the Grade 3-8 Math and Science PSSAs, and the Biology and Algebra Keystone exams. Students may use an accompanying English version of the same form as a resource. There is no Spanish version of the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone.

Student may respond in the Spanish test in English OR Spanish, or in the English test in English ONLY. Students must only answer in one form. The accompanying form should be marked with a Do Not Score label.

The Spanish Version is not available online.

See the [Accommodations Guidelines for English Learners](#) for more details.



## **Test Administrators, Proctors, PCAs, TSS**

### *Setting*

Some students may feel less anxious in a setting outside of the regular classroom and require an additional person, such as Therapeutic Support Staff, to be present. It must be noted that these persons may not coach or provide feedback (e.g., answer any questions pertaining to the content of the test, review rough drafts, or give any kind of feedback including indicating to students any items that need a second look) during or after completion of the test. This prohibition applies to test administrators, proctors, paraprofessionals, Personal Care Aide (PCA), Therapeutic Support Staff (TSS), nurses, or any other one-on-one aide who is assigned to a student during the administration of the state assessments. All persons assigned to the student(s) during testing must sign a [Test Security Certification](#) form (located in the Handbook for Assessment Coordinators).

To prevent any suspicion of testing anomalies, PDE strongly encourages school entities not to allow teachers to be Test Administrators and/or Proctors of their own students. As such, it is recommended that other teachers be used as Test Administrators and/or Proctors, or that a Proctor be in the testing room with the teacher if the teacher acts as the Test Administrator of his/her own class or student(s), or when special settings, such as small group or one-on-one, are utilized. Therefore, if students with accommodations are assigned to their own teacher who is familiar with their accommodations, PDE strongly recommends an additional Proctor be in the testing room.

In collaboration with the Bureau of Special Education, the following guidance is provided: A separate Test Administrator is required for test settings where an educational sign language interpreter has been assigned to interpret allowable Keystone and PSSA test material for a student(s). The school assessment coordinator must ensure that educational sign language interpreters for the Keystone and PSSA tests receive assessment training for these tests.

Note: A paraprofessional is permitted to administer the Keystone/PSSA tests with training. A PCA or TSS is not a test administrator and may not administer the tests. PCAs, TSSs, nurses, or any other one-on-one aide assigned to a student or classroom during testing must complete the PSTAT and the school assessment coordinator's training. See the Handbook for Assessment Coordinators for additional information.

## **Transcribe**

### *Response*

If the student typically types open-ended responses that must be transcribed to the paper test, then the online version of the test must be considered. This allows the best opportunity for the student to independently think and respond to test questions. Individual student(s) may enroll for the online test even if the rest of the school or district is using paper.

This accommodation is intended for a student with a physical disability or injury that severely limits or prevents the student's motor process of handwriting or keyboarding in the response space of the paper answer booklet or the online response space, or the student uses the keyboarding accommodation with a separate device (must be transcribed into the paper answer booklet or the online test).

Responses that are separately written or typed on a separate device must be transcribed verbatim by the school assessment coordinator or designee. Responses should be transcribed directly from the device into the student's regular test booklet or online test. If the text is printed for transcription, it should be sent directly to a secure printer, transcribed, and then securely destroyed. Responses may not be sent to an unsecure printer or emailed for printing. All original student work must be securely destroyed or permanently deleted from the device by the school assessment coordinator. The SAC may need to unlock the student's test ticket if the transcription is completed after the student has completed/ended the corresponding module.

The transcriber must sign the [Test Security Certification](#) form (located in the HAC). The Handbook for Assessment Coordinators recommends the presence of two people during the transcription of secure test materials.

Transcribing from [voice-to-text software](#), such as Dragon Dictate, into either the paper version or the online version, requires an assurance submission to PDE. See [Unique Accommodation Assurance](#).

Transcription should not be confused with Scribing. If a student must orally dictate open-ended responses to a test administrator, use the [Scribing](#) accommodation.

Select "Test administrator transcribed student responses" as a Response Accommodation.

## Unique Accommodations

### *Other*

Unique accommodations may be requested for a student who would not otherwise be able to access the test material, and for accommodations that could pose a security or validity risk to the test if used incorrectly. See the last column of Table A to view accommodations determined Unique Accommodations.

Because a unique accommodation might alter the test item content or validity of the student response, IEP teams need to be aware that the test results must be interpreted with caution.

PDE **must** be contacted for any accommodation not listed in this manual.

See [Unique Accommodation Assurance](#) for forms and procedures.

## Video Sign Language

### *Presentation*

There is no VSL available for any part of ELA or Literature Keystone tests.

May reference the [Supplemental Guidelines for American Sign Language \(ASL\) in the Video Sign Language \(VSL\) test version](#)

- The VSL online version is available for the PSSA Math and Science and Keystone Algebra I and Biology assessments for Spring and Winter administrations. There is no VSL available for the Summer Keystone administration.
- Students need to be identified as eligible for the sign language presentation accommodation by the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team, with documentation on the IEP and/or the Communication Plan
- For a student who does not have an IEP, documentation should be included in the 504 Plan or other record.
- Students must use a sign language accommodation during instructional periods and assessments; it should not be used solely during PSSA assessments.
- To access the VSL version, students must first be established in the Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) eDIRECT Test Setup system, with the corresponding VSL accommodation.
- School assessment coordinators must indicate on students' eDIRECT record that they have the sign language accommodation for math or science, prior to adding students to an online test session.
- All other test setup for VSL students would be the same as other students testing online with accommodations, i.e., IEP teams and student instructional teams need to ensure that students become familiar with the technological and communication aspects of the assessment process and have practice opportunities to view released test items in sign language format.
- Utilization of the VSL accommodation does not replace students' onsite educational interpreter during the assessment, as he/she is required to be there to provide access for questions and/or concerns.
- Educational interpreters continue to have access to testing materials in a secure location with the requirement they sign the [Confidentiality Agreement](#), in order to prepare accurate interpretations.

### School Assessment Coordinator and Proctor:

- Following notification of a student needing the VSL presentation accommodation, ensure there is a dedicated computer that is capable of downloading the large video files and that it meets all of the additional criteria set forth by DRC.
- Allow sufficient time to test the videos and VSL features, e.g., repositioning, pause, and replay.
- Know which students are eligible for the VSL version and specify on their eDIRECT record that they have the sign language accommodation for math or science, prior to adding students to an online test session.
- In advance, identify the number of students who will use the VSL accommodation to ensure recommended numbers for grouping for the

sign language interpreter, e.g., up to 5 elementary students per small group; up to 3 secondary students per small group.

- All persons assigned to the student(s) during testing must sign a [Test Security Certification](#) form (located in the HAC)

Educational Sign Language Interpreter:

- Interpret the online testing tutorial to familiarize students with the allowable tools that may be utilized during the assessment.
- Preview assessment materials up to 3 days prior to test administration in a secure location with a signed [Confidentiality Agreement](#).
- Although students may use the VSL accommodation, the interpreter may be present during the assessment to guarantee access for clarification(s), and/or interpretation(s) as per allowable accommodations.
- All persons assigned to the student(s) during testing must sign a [Test Security Certification](#) form (located in the HAC).

Select “Video Sign Language” in the online portal.

## **Visual/Graphic Aids**

*Presentation*

*Response*

All students may independently choose to use visual/graphic aids such as blank index cards, highlighters, and underlining. Students needing accommodations may use a keyboard overlay, reading line guide, or wiki stix as presentation accommodations. Blank graph paper, large-squared paper, special lined paper, or scratch paper, may be used throughout the assessment at student's request as a response accommodation. Overhead transparency paper is not allowed. All of the above visual/graphic aids listed must be provided by the LEA. Students are not permitted to bring their own. All scratch paper must be destroyed after testing.

Students may create their own graphic organizers and visual aids (e.g., number lines, writing organizers, etc.) on the scratch paper at the time of testing. Teacher- or LEA-created visual/graphic aids are not permitted on any portion of the PSSA or Keystone exams. Pre-made graphic organizers or visual aids must not be provided.

The school assessment coordinator or designee may use highlighters, underlining, colored stickers, or post-its **ONLY** in the procedural assessment directions, e.g., "GO ON", "STOP", "Turn to page 00 of your answer booklet. Complete question 00." This is only for a student who regularly requires a sticker on a procedural direction due to a disability that disallows the student from recognizing a direction to turn the page or to stop here. Since this requires opening a test booklet, only the SAC or designee may place the sticker(s). This may *not* be used as a general accommodation for all students.

SAC, designee, or test administrators may not use, or direct students to use, highlighters, underlining, and colored stickers on assessment directions associated with test items (e.g. "Read the following passage about wild ponies. Then answer questions 1–10" or "Use the figure below to answer question 00.")

Imbedded online tools include cross-off pencil, highlighter, sticky note, and line guide. Since the online test presents only one item at a time and does not require turning pages, the placement of sticky notes on directions by the SAC or designee is not allowed.

Select "Other" as a Presentation or Response Accommodation.

## **Voice-to-text**

### *Response*

Students who require this accommodation must use a school-issued or school-approved device to respond to the test items via voice-to-text technology. The student responses from the voice-to-text dictation software must be transcribed into the scorable answer booklet or the online portal.

When transcribing a student's response to a scorable answer document, the school assessment coordinator or designee must follow PDE's guidelines on entering the text verbatim (exactly as the text appears on the device the student used with the voice-to-text software). After transcription, the student's work should be deleted from the device. If the text is printed for transcription, it should be sent directly to a secure printer, transcribed, and then securely destroyed. Responses may not be sent to an unsecure printer or emailed for printing. The responses should be transcribed or printed prior to exiting the application as the responses may be lost from the device.

PDE does require that the dictation software be the only software accessible on the device during the assessment. The device must be locked down so the student is unable to access any other programs while taking the assessment. See the [Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lockdown](#).

The online system is not interoperable with assistive devices and/or software.

Use of voice-to-text requires a [Unique Accommodations Assurance](#) submission to PDE.

Select "Test administrator transcribed student responses" and "Assistive Technology Device – other than the online test mode" as Response Accommodations.

See also [Transcribe](#).

## Appendix A:

### UNIQUE ACCOMMODATION ASSURANCE SUBMISSION PROCESS

Some students may require the use of a unique accommodation to access the Keystone Exams and/or PSSA tests. Per the [Accommodations Guidelines](#), unique accommodations are intended for students with a disability that precludes them from accessing and responding to assessment materials through typical means, such as the hard copy test booklet or embedded accessibility features of the online assessment. To determine if an accommodation is a **unique** accommodation, see the last column of [Table A](#).

The Unique Accommodation Assurance Submission Process ensures PDE that unique accommodations will be carried out according to the parameters outlined in the Accommodations Guidelines to ensure test administration fidelity and security are maintained. Specific parameters will be reviewed in the submission process, but the submitter should also review these parameters in the Accommodations Guidelines before starting the submission process.

Unique Accommodation Assurances only apply to the student whose PA Secure ID is referenced in the submission. A new assurance must be completed for each student.

To use any **unique** accommodation, the School Assessment Coordinator or designee must submit the PSSA/Keystone Exam Unique Accommodation Assurance to PDE no less than 6 weeks in advance of the testing window. Follow the steps below to complete the submission:

1. Review the guidelines in the Accommodations Guidelines for each requested accommodation to ensure eligibility before completing the submission.
2. Preview the assurance questions below and gather the necessary information.
3. Submit the responses to PDE via this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/24-25-UniqueAccom>. Submissions should be made 6 weeks before testing begins. (Exceptions will be made for requests due to student injury). These responses serve as the official submission to PDE. The submitter will receive a confirmation of receipt and a copy of responses to keep for records within 5 business days of submission.
4. PDE will not provide a response unless there are questions about the contents of the electronic submission. If more information is needed about the use of the proposed unique accommodation, a PDE/BSE representative will contact the individual listed as the contact on the submission.
5. Documentation of this submission must be maintained by the School Assessment Coordinator (SAC) and may be subject to additional review by PDE/BSE. It is the submitter's responsibility to make sure the SAC receives a copy of the submission.
6. 2025 Unique Accommodation Assurance Submissions are good for one school year, including Winter 2024-2025 Keystones, Spring 2025 PSSAs and Keystones, and Summer 2025 Keystones. If a change needs to be made after the submission is made, please email [RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov](mailto:RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov). New submissions must be made for each school year.

**New for 2025:** The Unique Accommodation Confidentiality Agreement previously signed by principals, school assessment coordinators, and test administrators is no longer required. All principals, school assessment coordinators, and test administrators should continue to sign the PSSA or Keystone Test Security Certification.

NOTE: Requests to use unique accommodations are no longer emailed to PDE. Please follow the steps outlined above for all unique accommodations. Questions regarding unique accommodations should be sent to: [RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov](mailto:RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov).



## **2025 KEYSTONE/PSSA UNIQUE ACCOMMODATION ASSURANCE**

Before beginning the Survey Monkey link to submit the Unique Accommodation assurance, the submitter may wish to gather the information below:

- District/Charter School/Service Provider Name
- School Name
- Student PA Secure ID
- Student Grade
- Name/Title of Person Completing Request
- Phone Number of Person Completing Request
- Email Address of Person Completing Request
- Name of District Assessment Coordinator
- Name of School Assessment Coordinator
- Name of Special Education Coordinator
- Does the student receive special education services through an IEP?
- Does the student receive services through a Section 504 Plan?
- The Unique Accommodation requested:
  - Assistive Technology Device (including Augmentative or Alternative Communication Device, Calculator Apps on Device, and Delayed Auditory Feedback/Pitch Setting Frequency/Altered Auditory Feedback)
  - Read-Aloud of full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone (Read-aloud of TDA and Standards of Conventional English items, and Read-aloud of the full science and math PSSAs, Algebra I and Biology Keystones do NOT require a Unique Accommodation Assurance.)
  - Voice to Text Software or Device
  - Human Scribe for Text Dependent Analysis (A Unique Accommodations Assurance is needed for the TDA Responses for Grade 4-8 ELA PSSA ONLY.)
  - Glucose/Medical Monitoring with Smartphone/Smartwatch
  - Other accommodation not outlined above

For each accommodation requested, the submitter will be asked to provide the following information/answers to the following questions:

- The specific test(s) for which the accommodation is needed (PSSA ELA, PSSA Mathematics, PSSA Science, Keystone Literature, Keystone Algebra I, Keystone Biology)
- The assessment mode (paper/pencil, online, mixed mode)
- How the accommodation is documented in Section IV of the student's IEP or 504 Plan, or in other documentation.
- An assurance that the student receives this accommodation regularly in classroom instruction.
- An assurance that the specific guidelines, procedures, and considerations for each specific accommodation will be followed.
- An assurance that external devices that may be used to administer the accommodation will be locked down.

## Appendix B:



### **Confidentiality Agreement for Language Interpreters/Sight Translators and Educational Sign Language Interpreters**

Test security and student confidentiality are of the utmost importance to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and it is the Department's obligation to protect information about tests and students in the assessment process. Such information includes performance tasks, multiple-choice items, scoring rubrics, and student responses used in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment and Keystone Assessments. The nature and quality of an individual student's performance must not be released.

Qualified interpreters/sign translators (for languages other than English) and educational sign language interpreters may review test materials up to three days prior to test administration. Test materials must be reviewed in a secure location supervised by the principal or school assessment coordinator. Materials may not be removed from the secure location. Filing or retaining any notes beyond the testing window or making copies of any kind is strictly prohibited.

These assessments rely on the measurement of individual achievement. Any deviation from the assessment procedures outlined in the assessment and accommodation manuals [group work, teacher coaching (e.g., paraphrasing, explaining, giving suggestions about test items), pre-teaching or pre-release of the performance tasks or assessment items, use of old Pennsylvania assessments as preparation tools, etc.] is strictly prohibited and will be considered a violation of test security. Any action by a professional employee or commissioned officer that is willfully designed to divulge test questions, falsify student scores, or compromise the integrity of the state assessment system will be subject to disciplinary action under sections 1259-1267 of the School Code (24 P.S. Sections 12-1259-12-1267).

We are certain that you share our concern that all items and students' responses be handled in a professional and confidential manner. By signing this agreement, you acknowledge that you have read and understand this Confidentiality Agreement and agree to abide by these requirements.

---

Legal First Name (print)                      MI                      Legal Last Name (print)

---

Title    Address    Telephone

---

Signature    Date

---

Signature (principal or assessment coordinator)                      Date

## **Appendix C:**

### **Sample Vignettes for Read Aloud or Audio of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone**

Use the vignettes below to help determine if a student is eligible for a Read Aloud of the Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone accommodation

#### **Read Aloud of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone- Example #1**

J.B is a seventh-grade student with a genetic condition causing optic neuropathy. This condition resulted in a sudden and progressive loss of vision. He is currently learning braille, but not yet proficient to use it to access the general education curriculum. To access general education materials, he uses screen reading technology. He is not relying on his residual vision to access materials, as trying to read printed materials causes extreme eye strain and fatigue. The specially designed instruction (SDI) in his current IEP outlines the use of screen reading technology and use of a human read aloud of items that cannot be read through his screen reader. J.B.'s IEP team determined that he requires a read aloud of the full ELA PSSA using the imbedded audio technology, as he is not able to access text by any other means.

#### **Read Aloud of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone- Example #2**

A.C. is an eleventh-grade student who was previously assessed on the PASA DLM, the state alternate assessment designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. A.C.'s IEP team met and reviewed the PASA eligibility criteria and determined that he no longer qualifies. Therefore, he will take the Keystone Exams this year with appropriate accommodations determined by his IEP team. A.C. has an intellectual disability that significantly affects his ability to decode text. He is sometimes able to comprehend when materials are read to him, but not able to read independently. He uses this accommodation on all classroom assignments and assessments. A.C.'s IEP reflects a full read aloud of all printed materials as an accommodation to access and comprehend text on the Literature Keystone, as he is not able to engage with reading passages without this accommodation.

#### **Read Aloud of Full ELA PSSA/Literature Keystone- Example #3 (Non-Example)**

R.W. is a student with ADHD and a specific learning disability in reading. She is in fifth grade and reads independently at a third-grade level. She uses the accommodation of a read aloud in the classroom setting at times to help with distractibility and attention. R.W. is able to decode and show some comprehension of text with additional time as needed. The IEP team reviewed the full read aloud unique accommodation for her, and determined it is not necessary. While she will benefit from a read aloud of directions and non-reading content, she is able to comprehend some written material and does not require a full read aloud of the ELA assessment.

**Appendix D:**

<b>PSSA/Keystone Multiplication Table</b>												
<b>X</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
3	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36
4	4	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40	44	48
5	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60
6	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60	66	72
7	7	14	21	28	35	42	49	56	63	70	77	84
8	8	16	24	32	40	48	56	64	72	80	88	96
9	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90	99	108
10	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120
11	11	22	33	44	55	66	77	88	99	110	121	132
12	12	24	36	48	60	72	84	96	108	120	132	144

## Appendix E:

### Supplemental Guidelines for Device Lock-Down

Because of the wide array of student devices (and operating systems) being used across the Commonwealth, these guidelines cannot provide specific instructions for locking down every type of device and every operating system. The steps below are options for locking-down iPads and Chromebooks; however, it is advisable to consult school or district technology personnel to determine if there are processes in place for restricting outside access within approved student devices. Note: School staff should document the steps used to lock-down the device so that it's available for explanation/demonstration should PDE require additional details.

For additional questions, contact PDE at [RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov](mailto:RA-EDUNIQUEACCOM@pa.gov).

**Devices must be locked down, so students are unable to access any other programs while taking the assessment.**

#### Placing an iPad in Guided Access

1. Go to **Settings > General > Accessibility > Guided Access**
2. Turn on **Guided Access**
3. Tap **Passcode Settings**, then tap **Set Guided Access Passcode**
4. Enter a passcode, then re-enter it.
5. Open the app.
6. Triple-click the Home button.
7. Tap Start

#### Turning on Kiosk Mode on a Chromebook

1. Sign into the Admin console
2. Go to **Device management > Chrome management > Device settings > Kiosk Apps**
3. Click on **Manage Kiosk Applications**
4. Select the kiosk app you want to use.
5. On the same **Device Settings** page, under **Kiosk Settings > Auto-Launch Kiosk App**, select the app.

## Appendix F:

### Federal and State Laws Requiring Participation by Students with Disabilities

Several important laws require the participation of students with disabilities in standards-based instruction and assessment initiatives. These include federal laws such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA).

#### Every Student Succeeds Act

Guidance is available in electronic form on the US Department of Education's website at [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#).

Each State must implement a set of high-quality student academic assessments in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science, administered as follows:

Mathematics: in each of grades 3 through 8; and at least once in grades 9 through 12; Reading or language arts: in each of grades 3 through 8; and at least once in grades 9 through 12; Science: not less than one time during grades 3 through 5; grades 6 through 9; and grades 10 through 12.

#### Criteria

With the singular exception of those assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, the same academic assessments must be used to measure the achievement of all public elementary school and secondary school students in the State.

§ 200.6(a)(2)(i) specifies that all students with disabilities, except those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, must be assessed using the general academic assessment aligned with the challenging State academic standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled. Further, under § 200.6(a)(2)(ii), students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may be assessed using either the general assessment or an alternate assessment aligned with the challenging State academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled and with alternate academic achievement standards, if the State has adopted such alternate academic achievement standards.

#### Inclusion of Students

§ 200.6(b)(3) requires that a student with a disability receive appropriate accommodations, as determined by the relevant team articulated in § 200.6(b)(1)(i), (ii), or (iii), so that the student with a disability can participate in the assessment and receive the same benefits from the assessment that non-disabled students receive.

The determination of which accommodations would be appropriate for a student must be made individually by a student's IEP team, placement team, or other team the LEA designates to make these decisions.

To enable the participation of all in such assessments, States must provide all appropriate accommodations, such as interoperability with, and ability to use, assistive technology, for

children with disabilities (as defined in [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#), including students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and students with a disability who are provided accommodations under an Act other than the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), such as [ADA Amendments Act of 2008](#), necessary to measure the academic achievement of such children relative to the challenging State academic standards or alternate academic.

## **Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004**

IDEA specifically governs services provided to students with disabilities. Accountability at the individual level is provided through IEPs developed on the basis of each child's unique needs. IDEA requires the participation of students with disabilities in state- and district-wide assessments. Specific IDEA requirements include the following:

Children with disabilities are included in general state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations, where necessary [Sec. 612 (a) (16) (A)]. The term "individualized education program" or "IEP" means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with this section and that includes . . . a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of state or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate in such assessment; and if the IEP Team determines that the child will not participate in a particular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement (or part of such an assessment), a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate for the child; and how the child will be assessed [Sec. 614 (d) (1) (A) (V) and VI)].

## **Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act**

Section 504 provides individuals with disabilities with certain rights and protects individuals with disabilities against discrimination from federally funded programs and activities. Section 504 states the following:

*No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, as defined in section 705(20) of this title, shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency.*

In school settings, 504 legislation guarantees and protects students with disabilities who may not otherwise have an IEP but are still considered individuals with disabilities. The definition of a student with disabilities is much broader under 504 than it is under IDEA. An important part of the 504 plans developed by schools for students with disabilities are often the lists of accommodations that the student can utilize on assessments.

## Including All Students with Disabilities in State Accountability Assessments

Both federal and state laws require that all students with disabilities be administered assessments intended to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of students. IEP team members must actively engage in a planning process that addresses:

- assurance of the provision of accommodations to facilitate student access to grade-level instruction and state assessments; and
- use of alternate assessments to assess the achievement of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

### Links to access Pennsylvania School Code:

#### 22 PA Code

[Pennsylvania Public School Code](#)

#### Chapter 4

[Chapter 4 -- Academic Standards and Assessment - Pennsylvania Code](#)

**22 Pa. Code § 4.51.** State assessment system. (j) Children with disabilities shall be included in the State assessment system, with appropriate accommodations, where necessary. As appropriate, the Commonwealth will develop guidelines for the participation of children with disabilities in alternate assessments for those children who cannot participate in the State assessment as determined by each child's individualized Education Program team under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and this part.

#### Chapter 14

[Chapter 14 -- Special Education Services](#)

The Special Education regulations in Pennsylvania are found under the 22 PA Code, Chapter 14 which provides regulatory guidance to ensure compliance with the federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, and its regulations.

**§ 14.102. Purposes.** (a) It is the intent of the Board that children with disabilities be provided with quality special education services and programs. The purposes of this chapter are to serve the following:

- (1) To adopt Federal regulations by incorporation by reference to satisfy the statutory requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C.A. §§ 1400--1482) and to ensure that:
  - (i) Children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education which is designed to enable the student to participate fully and independently in the community, including preparation for employment or higher education.



- (ii) Children with disabilities have access to the general curriculum and participate in State and local assessments as established and described in Chapter 4 (relating to academic standards and assessment).

## Chapter 15

### [Chapter 15 -- Protected Handicapped Students](#)

This chapter addresses a school district's responsibility to comply with the requirements of Section 504

**§ 15.1. Purpose. (b)**Section 504 and its accompanying regulations protect otherwise qualified handicapped students who have physical, mental or health impairments from discrimination because of those impairments. The law and its regulations require public educational agencies to ensure that these students have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the ability of the protected handicapped student in question. School districts are required to provide these students with the aids, services and accommodations that are designed to meet the educational needs of protected handicapped students as adequately as the needs of non-handicapped students are met. These aids, services and accommodations may include, but are not limited to, special transportation, modified equipment, adjustments in the student's roster or the administration of needed medication.

## Pennsylvania Accountability Plan

[Future Ready PA Index](#)

## Pennsylvania ESSA State Plan

[Pennsylvania ESSA State Plan](#)

## **SUPPLEMENTAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES**

This section provides useful tools and resources for teams to use in selecting appropriate accommodations for students.

## Tool 1: Guidelines for Selecting Accommodations

Do...	Don't...
<b>Do</b> ... make accommodations decisions based on individualized needs.	<b>Don't</b> ... make accommodations decisions based on whatever is easiest to do (e.g., not providing preferential seating).
<b>Do</b> ... select accommodations that reduce the effect of the disability to access instruction and demonstrate learning.	<b>Don't</b> ... select accommodations that are unrelated to documented student learning needs or are intended to give students an unfair advantage.
<b>Do</b> ... be certain to document instructional and assessment accommodations on the IEP, 504 Plan, ELD Plan, or student record.	<b>Don't</b> ... use an accommodation that has not been documented on the IEP, 504 Plan, ELD Plan, or student record.
<b>Do</b> ... be familiar with the types of accommodations that can be used as both instructional and assessment accommodations.	<b>Don't</b> ... assume that all instructional accommodations are appropriate for use on all assessments.
<b>Do</b> ... be specific about the where, when, who, and how of providing accommodations.	<b>Don't</b> ... simply indicate an accommodation will be provided "as appropriate" or "as needed."
<b>Do</b> ... refer to state accommodations policies and understand implications of selections.	<b>Don't</b> ... check every accommodation possible on a checklist simply to be safe.
<b>Do</b> ... evaluate accommodations used by the student.	<b>Don't</b> ... assume the same accommodations remain appropriate year after year.
<b>Do</b> ... get input about accommodations from teachers, parents, and students, and use it to make decisions at IEP, 504, EL, or instructional team planning meetings.	<b>Don't</b> ... make decisions about instructional and assessment accommodations alone.
<b>Do</b> ... provide accommodations for assessments routinely used for classroom instruction.	<b>Don't</b> ... provide an assessment accommodation for the first time on the day of a test.
<b>Do</b> ... select accommodations based on specific individual needs in each content area.	<b>Don't</b> ... assume certain accommodations, such as extra time, are appropriate for every student in every content area.

## Tool 2: Guidelines for Using Accommodations

Do...	Don't...
<p><b>Do</b> ... place students in a small group of 1-5 for read aloud of all math, science, PSSA ELA Conventions of Standard English multiple-choice test items.</p>	<p><b>Don't</b> ... read aloud test items to the whole class.</p>
<p><b>Do</b> ... place students in a small group of 1-12 for extended time, distractibility, changed test schedule, or to replicate instructional setting.</p>	<p><b>Don't</b> ... read aloud any reading passages or related questions of the PSSA ELA or Literature Keystone Exam (See <a href="#">full ELA/Literature Read Aloud</a> for exceptions - all required Unique Accommodation Assurance paperwork must be completed and the specific guidelines and procedures must be followed.</p>
<p><b>Do</b> ... enable students to be independent learners and test takers.</p>	<p><b>Don't</b> ... use voice inflection, pointing, hinting, stickers or highlighters, posters, signs, student work, problem solving steps, scientific charts, grammar rules, reading strategies, or any other action or device to lead a student to a correct answer or away from a wrong answer.</p>
<p><b>Do</b> ... ensure students have had sufficient practice with the online system tutorial.</p>	<p><b>Don't</b> ... assume a read aloud of all test items is effective for all struggling readers.</p>
<p><b>Do</b> ... allow students to continue testing as long as they are working productively.</p>	<p><b>Don't</b> ... provide feedback, answer student questions about, or explain test items.</p>
<p><b>Do</b> ... allow only student created graphic organizers.</p>	<p><b>Don't</b> ... allow calculation devices for the non-calculator part of the test or for any part of the Grade 3 test.</p>
<p><b>Do</b>... allow student to review and edit what the scribe has written.</p>	<p><b>Don't</b> ... require a student to spell aloud every word in a dictated response.</p>
<p><b>Do</b> ... provide testing for a student who may be hospitalized or homebound as long as the student is receiving educational services.</p>	<p><b>Don't</b> ... allow students to discuss test items during breaks.</p>
<p><b>Do</b> ... complete an assurance form for a unique accommodation and submit it to PDE.</p>	<p><b>Don't</b> ... allow students to go to lunch, gym, library, etc., during a session.</p>
<p><b>Do</b> ... contact PDE for guidance regarding special circumstances such as death in the family, serious illness, or medical condition.</p>	<p><b>Don't</b> ... allow a test section to be completed on a separate day.</p>

### Tool 3: Accommodations from the Student's Perspective

Use this questionnaire to collect information about needed accommodations from the student's perspective. The questions can be completed independently or as part of an interview process. Whatever method is used, however, be certain that the student understands the concept of an accommodation, providing examples as necessary. Also, provide a list of possible accommodations to give the student a good understanding of the range of accommodations that may be available.

**1. Think about all the classes you are taking now. What is your best class?**

**2. Explain what you do well in this class.**

The things you said you can do well are your strengths. For example, you may have mentioned reading, writing, listening, working in groups, working alone, drawing, or doing your homework as some things you can do well. If you said you really like the subject, have a good memory, and work hard in class, these are also examples of your strengths.

**3. Now ask yourself, "What class is hardest?"**

**4. What is the hardest part of this class for you?**

The things you said were hardest are areas you need to work on during the school year. For example, you may have listed paying attention in class, reading the book, taking tests, listening, staying in the seat, remembering new information, doing homework, or doing work in groups. These are all things in which an accommodation may be helpful for you,

**5. In the list that follows, write down all of the classes you are taking now. Then look at a list of accommodations. Next to each class, write down what accommodation(s) you think might be helpful for you.**

Class List

Classes	Accommodations

This questionnaire was adapted from *A Student's Guide to the IEP* by the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (<http://nichcy.org/pubs/stuguide/st1book.htm>). Retrieved July 28, 2005.

## Tool 4: Parent Input in Accommodations

### Questions Parents Should Ask About Accommodations in Instruction and Assessments

#### About Instruction

- Is my child expected to reach regular or alternate achievement standards? Does this affect what types of accommodations are available to my child in instruction or on assessments?
- What accommodations does my child need to access and reach academic standards?
- Are there accommodations that could be allowed in instruction that are not currently being provided?
- Are there accommodations being used at home that could be used in instruction to help my child access and learn content or help in performing certain academic tasks?
- How can my child and I advocate to receive accommodations not yet provided in instruction?
- Are the accommodations my child is receiving in instruction meant to be a temporary support? If yes, what is the plan to help determine when to phase out or discontinue the use of a certain accommodation?

#### About Assessment

- How are the staff members who work with my child providing accommodations (regular, special education, or other staff)?
- How are the staff members who work with my child providing accommodations (across regular, special education, or other staff)?
- What are the tests my child needs to take, what do they measure (e.g., regular or alternate academic standards), and for what purpose is each given?
- Are the accommodations allowed on state tests also provided for district tests?
- Can my child participate in part of an assessment with or without accommodations?
- If my child is not taking the general assessment, is it because the test is “too hard” or because the accommodation needed is not allowed on the assessment?
- Are there consequences for allowing certain changes to how my child participates in a test? How will my child’s test scores count?
- Do consequences of accommodations vary by type of test?

## **Questions for Instruction and Assessment**

Is the need for each accommodation documented in my child's IEP or 504 plan? Are there too many or too few accommodations being provided?

What are my child's preferences for specific accommodations? If my child needs accommodations, how will they be provided?

If an accommodation used in instruction is not allowed on a test, is there another option to support the student that is allowed? If yes, has it been documented and tried in instruction first? If no, how is my child being prepared to work without the accommodation before the test?

**List other questions here.**

*Adapted from Minnesota Manual for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in Instruction and Assessment. Questions are based in part on questions and content from NCLD's Parent Advocacy Brief NCLB: Determining Appropriate Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, and Testing Students with Disabilities: Practical Strategies for Complying with District and State Requirements, 2nd ed. (2003), by Martha Thurlow, Judy Elliott, and James Ysseldyke.*

## Tool 5: Accommodations Use in the Classroom

Use this chart to track different aspects of how a student uses an accommodation in your classroom. This will help inform decision making on assessment accommodations.

**Student:**

**Date:**

What accommodation(s) does the student use in the classroom? List them under “accommodation” in the chart. Then follow the questions in the chart.

Accommodation	1. Is it noted in student’s IEP?	2. For what task(s) is it used (e.g., task type* or content/standard)?	3. Does the student use it for that task every time? Note how often.	4. Is the need for it fixed or changing?	5. Does the student use it alone or with assistance (e.g., para-professional, peers)?	6. Notes (e.g., does one accommodation seem more effective used with another on a task?).

*\*How taking in or responding to information presented, solving or organizing information, specific content/standards being learned or assessed, etc.*

*Adapted from Minnesota Manual for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in Instruction and Assessment.*



## Tool 6: After-Test Accommodations Questions

Use this form after a test to interview a student about the provided accommodation(s): whether it was used, whether it was useful, and whether it should be used again. Also note any adjustments or difficulties experienced by the student in either how the accommodation was administered or in using the accommodation during the assessment.

**Student:**

**Date:**

Test Taken	Accommodation Provided	Was the accommodation used?	Was the accommodation useful?	Were there any difficulties with the accommodation? Are adjustments needed?	Should the accommodation be used again?
1.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
2.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
3.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
4.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
5.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
6.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
7.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
8.		Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No

Student signature:

Assistant signature (if applicable):

*Adapted from Minnesota Manual for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in Instruction and Assessment.*

## Tool 7: Assessment Accommodations Plan

### Student Information

Name:

Date of Assessment:

Name of Assessment:

### Case Information

Special Education Teacher:

School Year:

Building/School:

General Education Teacher:

Assessment accommodations that student needs for this assessment and date arranged:

### Accommodation/Date

Accommodation	Date
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Comments:

Person responsible for arranging accommodations and due date:

### Person Responsible/Due Date

Person Responsible	Due Date
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Comments:

Room assignment for assessment:

Planners for this process (signatures):

Scheiber, B., & Talpers, J. (1985). *Campus Access for Learning Disabled Students: A Comprehensive Guide*. Pittsburgh: Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities

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## Acknowledgements

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National Council on Measurement in Education. (1995). *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement*. Washington, DC: Author.

Maryland Accommodations Manual for Use in Instruction and Assessment, 7/2/2012 Issue ID 201207

PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual: *Guidance for Districts and Decision-Making Teams to Ensure that PARCC Mid-Year, Performance-Based, and End-of-Year Assessments Produce Valid Results for All Students, First Edition*, PARTNERSHIP FOR ASSESSMENT OF READINESS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREERS (PARCC) Available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-assessment-policies>